

## PART FORTY-SIX

### THE STORY OF JOSEPH

(Genesis 37:1-36; 39:1—47:31)

1. *The Biblical Story: Joseph as a Youth in Canaan (37:1-36).*

1 And Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. 2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought the evil report of them unto their father. 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors. 4 And his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren; and they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: 7 for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves came round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. 8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. 9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed yet a dream; and, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? 11 And his brethren envied him; but his father kept the saying in mind.

12 *And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. 13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Are not thy brethren feeding the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto thm. And he said to him, Here am I. 14 And he said to him, Go now, see whether it is well with thy brethren, and well with the flock; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. 15 And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? 16 And he said, I am seeking my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they are feeding the flock. 17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.*

18 *And they saw him afar off, and before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. 19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. 20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, An evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. 21 And Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hand, and said, Let us not take his life. 22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood; cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him: that he might deliver him out of their hand, to restore him to his father. 23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph of his coat, the coat of many colors that was on him; 24 and they took him, and cast him into the pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.*

25 *And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. 26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit*

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

37:1-36

*is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, our flesh. And his brethren hearkened unto him. 28 And there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt.*

*29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothers. 30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go? 31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a he-goat, and dipped the coat in the blood; 32 and they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father, and said, This have we found: know now whether it is thy son's coat or not. 33 And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces. 34 And Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. 35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he said, For I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning. And his father wept for him. 36 And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, and officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard.*

(1) *The Motif of the Joseph-Story* is obvious, namely, that of the operation of Divine Providence in relation to human affairs, and in relation especially to all those eminent personages whose lives in any significant way become related to the development of God's Plan and Redemption, both through His people of the Old Covenant and His people of the New Covenant, the fleshly and spiritual seed of Abraham, respectively (Gal. 3:23-29). "With the exception of ch. 38 and ch. 49 the whole of this final section of Genesis is a biography of Joseph. This narrative,

unlike what has gone before, proceeds without any visible divine intervention and without any new revelation; it is one long lesson. Providence thwarts mens' plots and turns their malice to profit. The lesson is explicit in 50:20 (cf. 45:5-8). Betrayed by his brothers, Joseph is rescued by God who makes the betrayal itself serve the divine purpose, for its result—the arrival of Jacob's sons in Egypt is the first step in the making of a chosen people. This theme of salvation ('the survival of a numerous people,' 50:20) runs throughout the whole of the Old Testament to be enriched in the New. Here, as later in the Exodus, we have a preliminary sketch of the Redemption. Not a few details in the narrative bear witness to a precise knowledge of Egyptian affairs and customs as known to us from Egyptian sources" (JB, 59).

(2) *Joseph the Dreamer: His Brothers' Hatred* (vv. 1-24). We meet Joseph again as a lad of seventeen years dwelling with his father in the land of the latter's "sojourning," that is, in the area around Hebron (25:37). It is interesting to note that Jacob, like his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham, was just "sojourning" in the Land of Promise. They were still "pilgrims" (cf. Heb. 11:8-16). They owned nothing except the plot that had been purchased by Abraham for a burial site, the Cave of Machpelah (23:17-20). At the beginning of the significant history of Joseph, we find him on his way, at his father's command, to the place where his brothers were tending their flocks, supposedly near Shechem. However, on arriving at Shechem Jacob learned that the brothers had gone to Dothan, to which place he accordingly followed them. Already Joseph had aroused the hatred and envy of the brothers "on three counts" (as would be said in legal phraseology): 1. He reported to his father the misconduct (whatever form that took) of the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, Jacob's concubines. We find it diffi-

cult to believe that Joseph had any personal prejudices in the matter or even any personal desire to injure these men. We are inclined to think that his motive was good: apparently he had higher ideals than the brothers and felt that his father should know about their delinquencies. Or perhaps it was just childish naivete, on the part of this lad of seventeen. At any rate, the brothers hated him for voluntarily taking upon himself the role of a tale-bearer. However, there are some who would justify his actions, e.g., the following: "It is no just charge against Joseph that he brought an evil report of his brethren. Had he carried it out of malice, however true, it had been so far evil; but brought from a desire that parental advice might effect reformation, it was both justifiable and right" (SIBG, 273).

2. Jacob loved him more than his other children, and showed his partiality by decking out Joseph in "a coat of many colors." "A garment of several colors is a mark of honor in all countries, more especially in the East. In Europe every dignitary has its appropriate color and garment, in every profession and employment, civil or military. This was a long outer robe, made of many bright pieces and bright colors. It was expensive, showy, and usually worn only by persons of rank" (SIBG, 273). This garment must have been a constant source of irritation to the brothers. It is supposed to have been a long coat (tunic) with sleeves (cf. 2 Sam. 13:18), that is, an upper coat reaching to the wrists and ankles, such as noblemen and kings' daughters wore. This parental favoritism made Joseph actually hated by his brothers, so much so that they "*could not speak peaceably unto him,*" that is, ask him how he was, offer him the customary salutation, "Peace be with thee," etc.

3. *His dreams* of a prophetic character finally tipped the scales. The first dream was that his brothers' sheaves all made obeisance to his sheaf; the second, that the sun, moon, and eleven stars (that is

to say, his father, mother, and eleven brothers) all bowed down before him, pointing in an unmistakable way to Joseph's supremacy: the first to his supremacy over his brethren, the second to his supremacy over the whole house of Israel. "The brothers with their ill-will could not see anything in the dreams but the suggestions of his own ambition and pride of heart; and even the father, notwithstanding his partiality, was grieved by the second dream. The dreams are not represented as divine revelations; yet they are not to be regarded as pure flights of fancy from an ambitious heart, but as the presentiments of deep inward feelings, which were not produced without some divine influence being exerted upon Joseph's mind, and therefore were of prophetic significance, though they were not inspired directly by God, inasmuch as the purposes of God were still to remain hidden from the eyes of men for the saving good of all concerned" (K-D, 335). (Note the allusion, to his mother, v. 10. Rachel, Joseph's mother, was now dead, but the customs of the Jews and of other nations conceded the title of *mother* to one who was not really a mother, but merely the wife of a father.) These dreams were "interpreted" by Joseph himself: we can only wonder whether his demeanor in telling them expressed self-righteousness or sheer naivete. Certainly his interpretation indicated his future supremacy over his entire family: "the father could well sense that a secret pride and self-satisfaction prompted the telling and administered a deserved rebuke" (EG, 960). The father saw what the dream signified: he interpreted the luminaries to mean "I and thy mother and thy brethren." "The question naturally arises: how can the mother, though dead, make obeisance? The simplest answer is that though she was dead she lived in the memory of this son and the father" (EG, 960). We read that Jacob, though reprimanding his son, kept the son's saying "in mind" (cf. Luke 2:19, 51). Dreams play a large part in the history of Joseph (cf.

ch. 40); however, they are evidently not divine apparitions (as in 20:3, 28:12ff., 31:11, 24); essentially they are, in Joseph's case, of the character of *premonitions*.

We have been told in v. 8 that the brothers hated Joseph for his dreams and all the more for his interpretation of them. Now in v. 11, we read that they *envied* him. Envied him for what? Envy is now added because this second dream went far beyond the first in its implications. Previously, Joseph's supremacy over his brothers had been indicated. Now it is supremacy over the whole family that is suggested. "But Jacob, like Mary, Luke 2:19, bore the thing in mind. Strange things seemed to be foreshadowed by these remarkable dreams. In a measure they coincided with Jacob's own purposes, which he had intimated by the special cloak he had been providing for his favorite son. On the whole the folly of parental partiality is only too effectively portrayed" (EG, 960).

(3) *The Conspiracy* (vv. 18-24). Throughout all this Jacob seems to have been strangely ignorant of the attitude of his other brothers toward Rachel's son. Joseph himself seems not to have suspected that their envy was so strong as to turn into the commission of a crime against him. At any rate he went, under his father's orders, to Shechem but discovered that the brothers had moved on some distance to Dothan, a place fifteen miles north of Shechem, toward the plain of Jezreel. Joseph arrived at his destination only to find out that his brothers' hatred had burgeoned into a conspiracy to kill him. We can clearly detect the sheer contempt in their voices when, on seeing the lad approach them, they said one to another, "*Behold, this dreamer cometh!*" Immediately they formed the malicious resolution to put "this dreamer" to death, to throw him into one of the pits (cisterns), and then report to the father that a wild beast had slain him, and in this manner to bring the dreamer's *dreams and words* (v. 8) to nought.

We might raise the question at this point as to what kind of personality Joseph manifested in these various relationships. We find great difference of opinion. For instance, one writer tells us: "The very youthful Joseph must have been exasperating, to say the least. Undisciplined by contact with the world, he was boastful, thoughtless and egotistical. He needed the experience which came to him in order that he should become his noblest self. To be protected in a happy home from everything disagreeable is a pleasant experience, but not one which develops real greatness of character" (HH, 43). Some commentators think of Joseph as what we would call a "spoiled brat." We might ask, Is it possible to avoid the feeling, from what is said about him, especially in these days of his youth, that he was tainted with a large measure of self-righteousness? Other writers view the young man in a better light. Concerning the evil report which he brought back to his father of the evil doings of the sons of Bilhah and those of Zilpah, Murphy writes: "The unsophisticated child of home is prompt in the disapproval of evil and frank in the avowal of his feelings." With reference to Joseph's interpretations of his dreams, Murphy writes: "His frankness in reciting his dream to his brothers marks a spirit devoid of guile, and only dimly conscious of the import of his nightly visions" (MG, 442-443). Lange writes: "At the age of seventeen Joseph became a shepherd with his brethren. Jacob did not send his favorite son too early to the herds; yet, though the favorite, he was to begin to serve below the rest, as a shepherd-boy. At this age, however, Joseph had great naiveness and simplicity. He therefore imprudently tells his dreams, like an innocent child. On the other hand, however, he was very sedate; he was not enticed, therefore, by the evil example of some of his brethren, but considered it his duty to inform his father. . . . That the sons of the concubines surpassed the others in rude conduct, is easily understood.



Joseph's moral earnestness is, doubtless, the first stumbling-block to his brethren, whilst it strengthens his father in his good opinion" (CDHCG, 583).

At any rate, it was Reuben, who was the eldest son, and therefore specially responsible for his younger brother, opposed this murderous proposal. He dissuaded his brothers from killing Joseph outright, advising them to throw him into a dry pit (cistern) that was near. Naturally, Joseph would inevitably perish in the pit, and so their hatred was satisfied. However, it was Reuben's intention to take Joseph out of the pit later and restore him to his father. As soon as Joseph arrived on the scene, they took off his coat of many colors (his coat with sleeves) and threw him into the pit.

(4) *Joseph is Sold into Slavery* (vv. 25-28). No sooner had the would-be fratricides sat down to eat, after throwing Joseph into the dry cistern, than they espied a company of Ishmaelites from Gilead advancing along the road that traversed the plain of Dothan to the great caravan highway that led from Damascus by way of Megiddo, Ramleh and Gaza into Egypt. The caravan drew near laden with spices, including the balsam for which Gilead was so well-known (43:11; Jer. 8:22, 46:11). Judah seized this opportunity to propose to the brothers that they sell Joseph to these Ishmaelites. Said he, "*What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, our flesh.*" "Lest the victim's blood cry to heaven, the murderer covered it with earth (Gen. 4:10, Ezek. 24:7)" (JB, 61). And the brothers "*hearkened unto him.*"

Just what motivated Judah to take this step? Was it for the sum of money that would be their gain in consequence of the transaction? We can hardly think so. As we shall see later, Judah's conduct throughout the entire history of Joseph and his sons was marked by a

certain quality of nobility that we cannot overlook. "Reuben wished to deliver Joseph entirely from his brother's malice. Judah also wished to save his life, though not from brotherly love so much as from the feeling of horror, which was not quite extinct within him, at incurring the guilt of fratricide; but he would still like to get rid of him, that his dreams might not come true. Judah, like his brethren, was probably afraid that their father might confer upon Joseph the rights of the first-born, and so make him lord over them. His proposal was a welcome one. When the Arabs passed by, the brethren fetched Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites, who took him into Egypt" (K-D, 337). "Then Judah began to use the language of a hypocritical self-interest," says Delitzsch. This, however, seems not at all justified by Judah's after-history. It must be presupposed that Judah was unacquainted with Reuben's intention. The brethren were so much excited that Judah alone could not have hoped to rescue Joseph from their hand. The ferocity, especially, of Simeon and Levi, is known to us from former history. Judah, therefore, could not think otherwise than that Joseph must die from hunger in the pit. As in opposition to this, therefore, and not as a counteraction of Reuben's attempt at deliverance, is his proposal to be judged. Joseph lived still, though a slave. There was a possibility of his becoming free. He might make his escape by the caravan routes that passed south through his home. Reuben, in his tenderness, had made a subtle attempt to save him. In the bolder policy of Judah we see that subtle attempt crossed by one more daring. No doubt both had some ill-feeling towards Joseph, and were, therefore, not capable of a mutual and open understanding. That both, however, preserved a better conscience than the rest, is evident from the later history. . . . What Joseph says of himself afterwards, that he was stolen

out of the land of the Hebrews (40:15), does not contradict our narration. Was he to sell to the Egyptians the crime of his brethren?" (Lange, 584).

"The different names given to the traders—viz., *Ishmaelites* (vers. 25, 27, 28b), *Midianites* (ver. 28a), and *Medanites* (ver. 36)—do not show that the account has been drawn from different legends, but that these tribes were often confounded, from the fact that they resembled one another so closely, not only in their common descent from Abraham (16:15 and 25:2), but also in the similarity of their mode of life and their constant change of abode, that strangers could hardly distinguish them, especially when they appeared not as tribes but as Arabian merchants, such as they are here described as being: '*Midianites, merchantmen.*' [Why not say that the names were used *interchangeably*? For *Medanites*, see the marginal rendering of v. 28, ASV.] That descendants of Abraham should already be met with in this capacity is by no means strange, if we consider that 150 years had passed since Ishmael's dismissal from his father's house—a period amply sufficient for his descendants to have grown through marriage into a respectable tribe. The price, '*twenty (sc. shekels) of silver,*' was the price which Moses afterwards fixed as the value of a boy between 5 and 20 (Lev. 27:5), the average price of a slave being 30 shekels (Exo. 21:32). But the Ishmaelites naturally wanted to make money by the transaction" (K-D, 337). "It would not make sense to say in one breath, 'Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites,' and then in the same breath without explanation show how he was sold to Midianites, who, by the way, again appear as Ishmaelites before the end of the verse. Incidentally, in v. 36 a modification of the name Midianites occurs: they are called '*Medanites,*' [again see 25:2]. Nor is the difficulty grave. First of all, Ishmaelites and Midianites have one ancestor, Abraham (16:15, 25:2). Both groups may have been in this

caravan. The Ishmaelites may have been the dominant faction, the Midianites the more numerous. In such a case both designations would be suitable. Instead of trying to reconcile a surface discrepancy critics press the different names in the interest of proving that the material of the chapter came from two different sources" (Leupold, EG, 969). As to the statement attributed to Joseph in 40:15 in which he emphatically protested that he "was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews," Leupold adds: "But would you expect Joseph actually to reveal what his brothers had done to him? That passage would hardly cover the case of the Midianites who are supposed to have drawn him from a well. For to draw an abandoned wretch from a pit and to sell him is hardly theft" (EG, 969).

(5) *Jacob's Deep Grief* (vv. 29-36). The Ishmaelites, having completed the transaction, went on their way. Everything was settled in Reuben's absence; it may be that the brothers suspected that he intended to rescue Joseph. When he *returned* (note this verb: obviously, *he had been absent*) and found Joseph gone, he *rent his clothes* (a sign of intense grief "on the part of the natural man"), and exclaimed "*The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?*" That is, How shall I account to his father for his disappearance? The brothers, however, were at no loss about what to do: they dipped the colorfully variegated tunic (which had been an eyesore from the beginning) in the blood of a he-goat and sent it to Jacob, asking him whether it was Joseph's garment. ("Their revenge thus prepared a cruel shock for the father. Had the father controlled his grief he might have found it *suspicious* that the cloak was not torn, but only stained with blood"). At any rate, everything worked out as scheduled: the father examined the cloak, and recognized it immediately as Joseph's. But the murderers were hardly prepared for the intense grief that overwhelmed Jacob. Their cruel

device succeeded too well: Jacob was simply inconsolable; alarmed, and probably prompted by a feeling of guilt "all his sons and all his daughters" sought to comfort him. (Dinah is, of course, his only daughter named in Scripture). But Jacob refused to be comforted! He, too, *rent his garments and put sackcloth upon his loins and mourned for his son many days.* (Sackcloth was made of goat's hair, a coarse texture of a dark color: cf. Isa. 50:3, Rev. 6:12. Wearing sackcloth was another badge of grief among Jews and heathen alike: 2 Sam. 3:31; 1 Ki. 20:31, 21:27; 1 Chron. 21:16; Neh. 9:1; Isa. 37:1-2; Rev. 11:3). Assuming that Joseph—the child of his deep and true love, the son of Rachel—had been devoured and destroyed by wild beasts, Jacob gave himself over to bitter, uncontrollable grief, exclaiming, "Do not attempt to comfort me, for I will go down to Sheol mourning for my son." "How should his sons comfort him, when they were obliged to cover their wickedness with the sin of lying and hypocrisy, and when even Reuben, although at first beside himself at the failure of his plan, had not courage enough to disclose his brothers' crime" (K-D, 338).

While his father Jacob "wept for him," Joseph was taken into Egypt by the Midianites and sold to Potiphar, the commanding officer of the royal bodyguard, the official who executed the capital sentences ordered by the king (corresponding to a similar office among the Chaldeans, cf. 2 Ki. 25:8; Jer. 39:9, 52:12). "Joseph, while his father was mourning, was sold by the Midianites to Potiphar, the chief of Pharaoh's *trabantes*, to be first of all brought low, according to the wonderful counsel of God. and then to be exalted as ruler in Egypt, before whom his brothers would bow down, and as the savior of the house of Israel" (K-D, 338). Note the word *Sheol* here: this was the Hebrew counterpart of the Greek and Roman *Hades*, the gloomy underworld of departed spirits or "shades." (The word for the eternal abode of lost souls,

in the New Testament, is *Gebenna*, a name derived from the gorge outside Jerusalem known as Ge-Hinnom, or the Valley of Hinnom, the place where the refuse of the city was constantly burning. It is significant that Jesus used this term, Gehenna (cf. Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28, 18:9, 23, 15, 23:23; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5, Jas. 3:6). (For Sheol in the O.T., see especially Deut. 32:22, 2 Sam. 22:6; Job 11:8, 26:6; Psa. 16:10, 139:8; Prov. 15:11, 27:20; Isa. 28:18, Ezek. 32:27; Jon. 2:2, Hab. 2:5, etc.). Modern English translations generally use the originals, Sheol in the O.T., and Hades in the N.T. In most cases in the O.T., it simply signifies the grave. It can have no other meaning, apparently, in Gen. 37:35, 42:38; 1 Sam. 2:6; 1 Ki. 2:6; Job 14:13, 17:13, 16, and in many passages in the writing of David, Solomon, and the prophets. "The darkness and gloom of the grave was such that the word denoting it came to be applied to the abiding place of the miserable." (UBD, s.v.). In some instances, the word surely denotes the opposite of heaven (cf. Job 11:8, Psa. 139:8, Amos 9:3). In others it seems to mean strictly the abode of the wicked (as in Psa. 9:17, Prov. 23:14) as distinguished from the righteous. The same general concepts are apparent in the *Hades* of the New Testament writings. In some cases the term does surely refer to the grave (e.g., Acts 2:31, 1 Cor. 15:55); in others, to the underworld of punishment beyond the grave (Matt. 11:23, 16:18; Luke 10:15, 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; Rev. 1:18, 6:8; 20:13, 14). In classical Greek, Hades is indeed the unseen world, taking its name from the god of this world. In Greek mythology the cosmos was divided among three brothers: Zeus ruled over the land, Poseidon over the sea, and Hades over the world beyond death and the grave. (Their Roman counterparts were Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto). In the eleventh chapter of the *Odyssey*, Homer pictures Odysseus and his crew as "plunging into the deep waters of the river Oceanus [which was supposed

to encircle the earth], where lie the land and city of the Cimmerians who live enshrouded in mist and darkness, which the rays of the sun never pierce either at his rising or as he goes down again out of the heavens, but the poor wretches live in one long melancholy night. When we got there, we beached the ship, took the sheep out of her, and went along by the waters of Oceanus till we came to the place of which Circe had told us." This place was at the entrance to Hades, the underworld. Odysseus goes on to tell how he ordered his men to dig a trench there, how he prayed "sufficiently" to the dead, and how he then took the necessary steps to achieve communication with the "shades" who inhabited this dreary land. He tells the story as follows: "I cut the throats of the two sheep and let the blood run into the trench, whereon the ghosts come trooping up from dark Erebus—brides, young bachelors, old men worn out with toil, maids who had been crossed in love, and brave men who had been killed in battle, with their armor still smirched with blood; they came from every quarter and flitted round the trench with a strange kind of screaming sound that made me turn pale with fear." One by one the great heroes and heroines of the Heroic Age came up to the trench; and on drinking of the sacrificial blood, each recovered memory and conversed with Odysseus [the Latin Ulysses] concerning reminiscences of life on earth. The testimony of the "shade" or ghost of Achilles is perhaps the most significant of all. Said Achilles: "Speak not a word in death's favor. I would rather be a paid servant in a poor man's house and be above ground than king of kings among the dead" (Samuel Butler translation). The Butcher-Lang translation here is more meaningful, as follows: Achilles says: "Nay, speak not comfortably to me of death, oh great Odysseus. Rather would I live on ground as the hireling of another, with a landless man who had no great livelihood, than bear sway among all the

dead that he departed." At the termination of the conversation, Odysseus tells us: "So I spake, and the spirit of the son of Aeacus, fleet of foot, passed with great strides along the mead of asphodel, rejoicing in that I had told him of his son's renown." This is the true picture of Hades as envisioned in the early classical world—the Greek counterpart of the Hebrew Sheol. It was the dark, dank, colorless habitation of the "shades" of the "departed dead," a refuge, one might well say, of eternal melancholy hopelessness. This would indeed be "eternal punishment."

T. Lewis makes the following interesting comments on "the primitive conception of Sheol." "This is the first place in which the word occurs, and it is very important to trace, as far as we can, the earliest conception, or rather emotion, out of which it arose. 'I will go down to my son mourning to Sheol'—*towards* Sheol, or, on the way to Sheol, the reference being to the decline of life terminating in that unknown state, place, or condition of being, so called. One thing is clear: it was not a state of not-being, if we may use so paradoxical an expression. Jacob was going to his son; he was still his son; there is yet a tie between him and his father; he is still spoken of as a personality; he is still regarded as having a being somehow, and somewhere. Compare 2 Sam. 12:23, 'I am going to *him*, but *he* shall not return to *me*.' The *him* and the *me* in this case, like the *I* and the *my son* in Genesis, are alike personal. In the earliest language, where all is hearty, such use of the pronoun could have been no unmeaning figure. The being of the one who has disappeared is no less real than that of the one who remains still seen, still *found*, to use the Shemitic term for existence, or *out-being*, as a known and visible state. . . . It was not to his son in his grave, for Joseph had no grave. His body was supposed to be lying somewhere in the desert, or carried off, by the wild beasts (v. 33). To resolve it all into figurative expressions for the grave would be



simply carrying our meaningless modern rhetoric into ancient forms of speech employed, in their first use, not for the reflex painting, but for the very utterance of emotional conceptions. However indefinite they may be, they are too mournfully real to admit of any such explanations. Looking at it steadily from this primitive standpoint, we are compelled to say, that an undoubting conviction of personal extinction at death, leaving nothing but a dismembered, decomposing body, now belonging to no one, would never have given rise to such language. The mere conception of the grave, as a place of burial, is too narrow for it. It, alone, would have destroyed the idea of its germ, rather than have given origin or expansion to it. The fact, too, that they had a well-known word for the grave, as a confined place of deposit for the body (see Gen. 23:9 for a possession, or property, of the grave) shows that this other name, and this other conception, were not dependent upon it, nor derived from it. . . . There is reference also to the German *holle*, or the general term of the northern nations (Gothic-Scandinavian, Saxon), denoting *hole*, or cavity, though this is the very question, whether the northern conception is not a secondary one, connected with that later thought of penal confinement which was never separable from the Saxon *hell*—a sense-limitation, in fact, of the more indefinite and more spiritual notion presented primarily by the Greek Hades, and which furnishes the true parallel to the early Hebrew Sheol. . . . That Sheol, in its primary sense, did not mean the grave, and in fact had no etymological association with it, is shown by the fact already mentioned, that there was a distinct word for the latter, of still earlier occurrence in the Scriptures, common in all the Shemitic languages, and presenting the definite primary conception of digging, or excavating. There was no room here for expansion into the greater thought. . . . Had Joseph been lying by the side of his mother in the field

near Bethlehem Ephratah, or with Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebekah, in the cave of Machpelah, or in some Egyptian sarcophagus, embalmed with costliest spices and wrapped in aromatic linen, the idea of his unbroken personality would have been no more vivid, Joseph himself (the very *ipse*) would have been no nearer, or more real, to the mourning father, than as he thought of his body lying mangled in the wilderness, or borne by rapacious birds to the supposed four corners of the earth. I will go to my son mourning *Sheol-ward*—on the way to the unknown land. . . . This view of Sheol is strongly corroborated by the parallel etymology, and the parallel connection of ideas we find in the origin and use of the Greek Hades. . . . Hades, like Sheol, had its two conceptual stages, first of *state*, afterwards of *locality*. To the Greek word, however, there was added a third idea. It came to denote also a power; and so was used for the supposed king of the dead (*Iliad*, 20:61). This personification appears again in the later Scriptures, 1 Cor. 15:55, O Hades, where is thy victory? and in Rev. 6:8, 20:13, 14, where Hades becomes limited to Gehenna, and its general power, as keeper of souls, is abolished” (In Lange, 586, 587).

Again: “See a very remarkable passage, Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1, ch. 51, respecting the belief of the very ancient Egyptians: ‘The habitations of the living they call inns, or lodging-places, since we dwell in them so short a time, but those of the dead they style *everlasting abodes*, as residing in them forever.’ Why should not Jacob have had the idea as well as these most ancient Egyptians? That his thought was more indefinite, that it had less of circumstance and locality, less imagery every way, than the Greek and Egyptian fancy gave it, only proves its higher purity as a divine hope, a sublime act of faith, rather than a poetical picturing, or a speculative dogma. The less it assumed to know, or even to imagine, showed its stronger trust in the *unseen* world as an assured reality, but depen-

dent solely for its clearer revelation on the unseen God. The faith was all the stronger, the less the aid it received from the sense or the imagination, It was grounded on the surer rock of the 'everlasting covenant' made with the fathers, though in it not a word was said directly of a future life. 'The days of the years of my pilgrimage,' says Jacob. He was 'a sojourner upon the earth as his fathers before him.' The language has no meaning except as pointing to a home, an eternal habitation, whether in Sheol, or through Sheol, was not known. It was enough that it was a return unto God, 'his people's dwelling-place in all generations' (Psa. 90:1). It was, in some way, a 'living unto him,' however they might disappear from earth and time; for 'he is not the God of the dead.' His covenant was an assurance of the continued being of those with whom it was made, 'Because he lived they should live also.' 'Art thou not from everlasting, Jehovah, my God, my Holy One? we shall not (wholly) die.' 'Thou wilt lay us up in Sheol; thou wilt call and we will answer; thou wilt have regard to the work of thy hands.' *The pure doctrine of a personal God, and a belief in human extinction, have never since been found conjoined. Can we believe it of the lofty theism of the patriarchal age?*" (T. Lewis, *ibid.*, 587). (Cf. Gen. 47:9, Heb. 11:8ff., Matt. 22:32, John 14:19, Hab. 1:12, etc. Cf. also Psa. 16:8-10, Acts 2:27: in these passages the reference is specifically to the redemption of the body, the last phase of redemption, known also as the putting on of immortality (Rom. 8:23, 1:5-7; Rom. 8:11, Phil. 3:20-21, 1 Cor. 15:35-58; 2 Cor. 5:1-10: note here the phrase, "that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life," v. 4).

A final word here, *in re*. Gen. 37:35: "Jacob will wear the mourner's garb till his death, so that in the underworld his son may know how deep his grief has been

(Gunkel). The shade was believed to appear in *Sheol* in the condition in which it left the world" (Skinner, ICCG, 449).

After all, Jacob's inconsolable grief was in a sense a just retribution: cf. Gal. 6:7-8. "Jacob's experience reflects some fulfilment of the dictum that 'as a man sows so shall he also reap.' Himself a deceiver who stole Esau's blessing and bought his birthright, he is now cruelly deceived by his own sons. Twenty years later the deceiving sons are to experience the anguish of guilty consciences as they see themselves threatened with retribution (Cf. 42:21)" (HSB, 61).

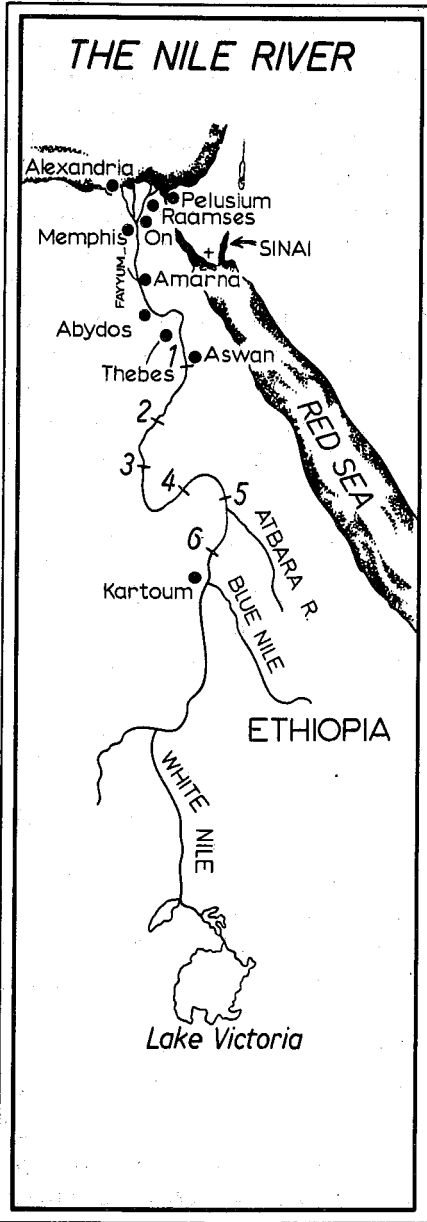
Of the wickedness of Jacob's sons, there is much to be said. "Lord, what is man? Behold the sons of Jacob *hating* a brother who had done them no evil, *envying* a brother because God portended him good, murdering a brother in purpose, and preparing to break a father's heart with sorrow. Yet, in the midst of all, they sat down to eat bread! But passion blinds the eyes, hardens the heart, and sears the conscience. The deeds of men differ in comparative enormity; but every heart is desperately wicked till its evil is mortified, Rom. 8:13, and its nature renewed, Rom. 12:2, by the Spirit of God" (SIBG, 275).

"Imagine Joseph advancing in all the unsuspecting openness of brotherly affection. How astonished and terrified must he have been at the cold reception, the ferocious aspect, the rough usage of his unnatural assailants! A vivid picture of his state of agony and despair was afterwards drawn by themselves (cf. ch. 42:21). *They sat down to eat bread.* What a view does this exhibit of those hardened profligates! Their common share in this conspiracy is not the only dismal feature in the story. The rapidity, the almost instantaneous manner in which the proposal was followed by their joint resolution, and the cool indifference, or rather the fiendish

satisfaction, with which they sat down to regale themselves, is astonishing; it is impossible that mere envy at his dreams, his gaudy dress, or the doting partiality of their common father, could have goaded them on to such a pitch of frenzied resentment, or confirmed them in such consummate wickedness. Their hatred of Joseph must have had a far deeper seat—must have been produced by dislike of his piety and other excellences, which made his character and conduct a constant censure upon theirs, and on account of which they found they could never be at ease till they had rid themselves of his hated presence. This was the true solution of the mystery, just as it was in the case of Cain (1 John 3:12)” (Jamieson, CECG, 232). *How true it is always that evil hates true piety and becomes enraged in the very presence of it.*

2. *Joseph as Prisoner in Egypt (39:1—41:45).*

39 *And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hand of the Ishmaelites, that had brought him down thither. 2 And Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that Jehovah was with him, and that Jehovah made all that he did to prosper in his hand. 4 And Joseph found favor in his sight, and he ministered unto him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. 5 And it came to pass from the time that he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Jehovah was upon all that he had, in the house and in the field. 6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught that was with him, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was comely, and well-favored.*



**EGYPT  
and the Nile**

“Egypt is the gift  
of the Nile.”  
(Herodotus)

The Nile is 3,743 miles long from its origin at Lake Victoria in central Africa to the Mediterranean.

Numbers on the map indicate the cataracts of the Nile.

The first cataract at Aswan marks the southern limits of Egypt.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH 39:1—41:45

7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. 8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master knoweth not what is with me in the house, and he hath put all that he hath into my hand: 9 he is not greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? 10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. 11 And it came to pass about this time, that he went into the house to do his work; and there was none of the men of the house there within. 12 And she caught him by the garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. 13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, 14 that she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in a Hebrew unto us to mock us: he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: 15 and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment by me, and fled, and got him out. 16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his master came home. 17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, whom thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: 18 and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment by me, and fled out.

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. 20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. 21 But

Jehovah was with Joseph, and showed kindness unto him, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. 23 The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand, because Jehovah was with him; and that which he did, Jehovah made it to prosper.

40 And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord the king of Egypt. 2 And Pharaoh was wroth against his two officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. 3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. 4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he ministered unto them: and they continued a season in ward. 5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream, in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were bound in the prison. 6 And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and saw them, and, behold, they were sad. 7 And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in ward in his master's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sad today? 8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell it me, I pray you.

9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; 10 and in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and its blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: 11 and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the



THE STORY OF JOSEPH 39:1—41:45

cup into Pharaoh's hand. 12 And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days; 13 wherein yet three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head, and restore thee unto thine office: and thou shalt give Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. 14 But have me in thy remembrance when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: 15 for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, three baskets of white bread were on my head: 17 and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of baked food for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. 18 And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof; the three baskets are three days; 19 within yet three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee. 20 And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and the head of the chief baker among his servants. 21 And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand: 22 but he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. 23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

41 And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. 2 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, well-favored and fat-fleshed; and they fed in the reed-grass. 3 And, behold, seven other kine came up after

them out of the river, ill-favored and lean-fleshed, and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. 4 And the ill-favored and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well-favored and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. 5 And he slept and dreamed a second time: and, behold, seven ears of grain came up upon one stalk, rank and good. 6 And behold, seven ears, thin and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them. 7 And the thin ears swallowed up the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. 8 And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

9 Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: 10 Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, me and the chief baker: 11 and we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. 12 And there was with us there a young man, a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. 13 And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. 15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee, that when thou hearest a dream thou canst interpret it. 16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace. And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph,

THE STORY OF JOSEPH 39:1—41:45

17 In my dream, behold, I stood upon the brink of the river: 18 and, behold, there came out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed and well-favored; and they fed in the reed-grass: 19 and, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favored and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: 20 and the lean and ill-favored kine did eat up the first seven fat kine: 21 and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favored, as at the beginning. So I awoke. 22 And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up upon one stalk, full and good; 23 and, behold seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: 24 and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears; and I told it unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me.

25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: what God is about to do he hath declared unto Pharaoh. 26 The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. 27 And the seven lean and ill-favored kine that came up after them are seven years, and also the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind; they shall be seven years of famine. 28 That is the thing which I spake unto Pharaoh: what God is about to do he hath showed unto Pharaoh. 29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: 30 and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; 31 and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine which followeth; for it shall be very grievous. 32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. 33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

34 Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint overseers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. 35 And let them gather all the food of these good years that come, and lay up grain under the hand of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. 36 And the food shall be for a store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. 38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit of God is? 39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this there is none so discreet and wise as thou: 40 thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. 41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. 42 And Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; 43 and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he set him over all the land of Egypt. 44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt. 45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenathpaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On. And Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

(1) *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* (39:1-23). It is a characteristic of Joseph that throughout his life his faithfulness to God brought upon him, and upon all those associated with him, the blessing of God. So it was in Potiphar's household into which he was sold as a slave.

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH 39:1—41:45

Here he soon rose to the high post of overseer, and the house, we are told, was divinely blessed for his sake, a fact which even Potiphar himself recognized (vv. 3-6). We have to admit that Joseph, whatever may have been his faults as a youth, certainly developed into one of the most admirable men of all those who figure in the Old Testament records. "The character of Joseph stands out as one of the purest in the whole compass of sacred history. No temptation could overcome his high-toned morality, no calamity could shake his implicit faith in God. Adversity in its bitterest form did not unduly depress him, and neither did the giddiest height of prosperity generate unseemly pride. In his father's house pampered and fondled; in slavery wantonly and falsely accused; in the palace wielding unlimited power, he was always the same truthful, pure, just, noble-minded, God-fearing man" (SIBG, 279). The fact he loved God, however, and was destined to accomplish God's will in Egypt did not make it possible for him to be spared the injustice of false accusations and undeserved imprisonment. When Potiphar's wife, a fair example of her kind (whose name is Legion), tried to take advantage of his physical attractiveness and vigor by repeatedly trying to inveigle him into an adulterous relationship, he stoutly refused to be unfaithful either to his God or to his master, and fled the place of temptation, even as the Apostle advises all righteous men to do on facing the snares of the devil (1 Tim. 6:11, 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Cor. 6:18, 1 Tim. 3:7, Eph. 6:11). From this human point of view, Joseph could not betray the trust placed in him by Potiphar. It is significant, however, that he affirmed a higher motivation for his refusal, "*How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*" Angered by Joseph's refusal to accept her advances, Potiphar's wife determined to get revenge. She called for the male servants in the house, who in any event would have been glad to be rid of the "foreigner."

She spoke of Joseph as a Hebrew using Egyptian racial prejudice to serve her purpose. On one occasion, previously, finding herself alone with Joseph, she took hold of his garment in her desire to consummate her sinful appeal. But this was the occasion on which Joseph fled, unfortunately, however, leaving the garment in her hand. Now, in her desire to make him pay for his rejection of her, she told the Egyptian servants that Joseph had been the aggressor, and that she had resisted his advances, calling for help, and seizing his garment when he fled. When Potiphar heard this report he was angered and had Joseph put into prison. (It has been suggested that he might have had some doubt about his wife's story, otherwise Joseph would have been put to death immediately.) (It should be noted, too, that Joseph had the responsibility for all the business of this household, with one exception, namely, the provision of food (43:32). Egyptians would have considered themselves defiled, we are told, if they were to eat with a foreigner.) Some authorities call attention to the Egyptian *Tale of Two Brothers* as an interesting parallel of this account of the temptation of Joseph. In that story it is the younger brother who is falsely accused by the older brother's wife. When the truth is finally known, the wicked wife is slain by her husband. It seems rather far-fetched to establish any significant correspondence between the two tales.

(2) *Joseph in Prison* (vv. 20-23). "The best of men have been accused of the most atrocious crimes. And there is a great readiness in men to believe an evil report, especially against the professors of religion. Here the most improbable story gains easy credit. How often is guilt honored, and innocence oppressed and punished! Yet let me not be weary in well-doing, or in resisting unto blood, striving against sin; for the bitterest sufferings, with a good conscience, are to be preferred to all the

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH 39:1—41:45

pleasures of sin. Though persecutors should be deaf to my plea, there is one, Jehovah, who seeth and judgeth. In his time he will vindicate my character and plead my cause. No prison can exclude his presence" (SIBG, 279). Joseph was to learn that "to them that love God all things work together for good" (Rom. 8:28). "When Joseph was sold as a slave he could hardly have known that God was arranging circumstances which would make possible the fulfilment of his dreams (37:5-10). Nor could he have suspected the long years needed before the fulfilment. But of one truth he early became aware—that God was with him, for no adversity could make him bitter or distrustful of God. Twice we are told that the Lord *was with Joseph* (39:2, 21). Joseph's rich spiritual insight was plainly evidenced when he attributed to God his imprisonment and slavery as well as his rise to power (45:7, 8). His brothers sinned as they wrought their own wilful wickedness, but God used it for the accomplishment of the divine purpose (45:7, 50:20, Psa. 76:10) (HSB, 63). (Cf. Isa. 46:8-11). The story was the same in prison as it had been in Potiphar's house: Joseph rose to the position of great responsibility: the keeper of the prison soon came to trust him implicitly, and finally put him in charge of all those who were in the prison. "Jehovah was with Joseph and showed kindness unto him," etc., v. 21.

(3) *Joseph the Interpreter of Dreams* (40:1-23). It so happened that the king's chief butler and chief baker were thrust into prison for offenses against the Pharaoh. In prison each of these men had a remarkable dream which he related to Joseph. The butler dreamed that he saw a vine with three branches, the clusters of which produced ripe grapes; these he pressed into Pharaoh's cup. As 'scribe of the sideboard' he had been responsible, of course, for the king's food and drink. The dream was in harmony with his vocation, his usual employment: however, he had

some something to cause him to fall into disfavor with the monarch. Joseph interpreted the dream to signify that in three days he, the butler, should be released from prison and restored to his position. Joseph asked of this butler a favor, a very small favor in a sense, in view of the butler's restoration to his place in the royal court: he asked the butler to call the Pharaoh's attention to his unjust imprisonment and to intercede for him. He did not mention the incident with Potiphar's wife but did protest his innocence. He mentioned his having been "stolen away" out of the land of the Hebrews (v. 15), a reminder that he had not been a slave from birth. The baker dreamed that he had three white baskets on his head, the uppermost basket containing baked meats for Pharaoh which were eaten by the birds while he was carrying it. (We learn that bread baskets such as those described here appear in tomb paintings from ancient Egypt.) This dream was explained by Joseph to mean that the chief baker also should be taken from prison in three days, but only to be hung on a tree for the birds to eat the flesh off his bones. (To the Egyptian who held that the welfare of the soul in the next life would be dependent on the preservation of the body, that is, the earthly body, such a destiny would be particularly offensive.) The two dreams were fulfilled to the letter: on the third day the chief butler was restored to his office, where he immediately forgot all about Joseph and his request; and on the third day the chief baker was hanged. "Joseph had to choose between his position and his purity. He chose the latter only to suffer unjust accusation and punishment for a crime he did not commit. Yet his noble stand was not in vain, for it resulted in his meeting the king's butler and baker, and this contact in turn made possible his becoming premier of Egypt under the Pharaoh" (HSB, 64).



## THE STORY OF JOSEPH 39:1—41:45

(4) *Joseph the Interpreter of the Pharaoh's Dreams* (41:1-36). For two whole years the chief butler "forgot," and for two whole years Joseph lingered in prison. Of all the sins in the category, yet the most universal undoubtedly, what is baser, what is more deplorable, more genuinely selfish, than ingratitude? The Bible portrays heaven as essentially the place of joyous eternal thanksgiving (Rev. 5:9-14, 11:15-17, 15:2-3, 19:1-10): and in this world he who has the most thankfulness in his heart has the most of heaven in his life. At the end of the two years, however, something happened: The Pharaoh himself had two dreams. In the first he stood by the river, the Nile of course, on which the very life of all Egypt depends. Irrigation comes to the soil of Egypt by the annual overflow of the Nile; apart from this river, Egypt would be only a part of the great desert which covers all of northern Africa. The Pharaoh saw, coming up out of the river seven fat "kine" (cows) which proceeded to feed on the marsh-grass that grew along its banks. (In the Egyptian hieroglyphics, the ox is the emblem of agriculture). Then, behold, the Pharaoh saw seven lean cows come up out of the river and devour the seven fat ones. Then he had a second dream: in this he dreamed that seven full ears of grain came up on one stalk, and behold, seven thin ears sprung up after the good ones and devoured them. The king was sore troubled, of course; none of his magicians (not necessarily wise men, but necromancers) could interpret these dreams. Then it was that the chief butler *remembered!* He came to the Pharaoh with an open confession, "I do remember my faults this day!" and he told the king about the young Hebrew prisoner who had correctly interpreted the dreams of the butler and baker in prison. Joseph was hastily released and prepared for his meeting with the Pharaoh. As of Semitic origin of course he wore a beard, but now he must be shaved in anticipation of his meeting with

the Egyptian monarch (it must be remembered that "Pharaoh" was only a title, like Caesar, Czar, Kaiser, etc.). Suitable clothing was provided for Joseph and he was ushered into the presence of the king. With a minimum of ceremony, the monarch quickly related to Joseph the contents of his dreams which were actually only one as to meaning. It is interesting to note that Joseph disclaimed any personal psychic powers: "what God is about to do he hath declared unto Pharaoh," v. 25. Joseph then explained the dreams of the cattle and the ears of grain as descriptive of the immediate agricultural future of Egypt: the seven good cattle and seven good ears signified seven years of plenty; but the seven thin cattle and the seven bad ears signified seven bad years that would follow. God was warning the Pharaoh that he must prepare during the seven years of plenty for the seven years of famine that would inevitably follow. "The dream," said Joseph, "*was doubled unto Pharaoh, because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.*" Joseph then proceeds to make some recommendations. He suggests that the king appoint an administrator to be responsible for securing sufficient food during the years of plenty to provide for the needs which would arise during the years of famine. One fifth of the produce of the good years, he said, should be placed in the royal granaries for distribution throughout the land during the lean years. The king recognized in Joseph the kind of administrator he was now in need of, the kind who would serve Egypt in the impending time of crisis. Whereupon, he appointed Joseph himself as Grand Visier, or Prime Minister ("over my house," 41:10). The official signet ring was given to Joseph that he would have power to issue edicts in the name and with the seal of the Pharaoh. He arrayed Joseph in vestments of Egyptian fine linen, the material used by the royal family and the highest officials of the realm. The king put the gold chain around Joseph's neck, the emblem of a signal honor, and

kind of "distinguished service" medal. He caused Joseph to ride in the second chariot, next to that of the king himself. A herald went before Joseph crying out, *Abrech*, meaning probably, *Bow the knee*. The royal command was given as stated in v. 44, and meaning, it would seem, something like "Without thee, or thy command, shall no man do anything." Joseph was also given an Egyptian name, Zaphenath-paneah (a name of uncertain derivation and said to be meaningless in Hebrew). He took as his wife an Egyptian named Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, a priest of On. "A characteristically Egyptian tableau of investiture: Joseph is made viceroy of Egypt; he is second only to the Pharaoh; his house is the centre of administration and he is the keeper of the king's seal. The runners before his chariot of state cry 'Abrek,' which suggests the Egyptian 'thy heart to thee,' 'beware,' 'make way'" (JB, 65). "These three names indicate pretty clearly the nature of the religion at that time prevailing in Egypt. *Asenath* signifies 'belonging to *Neith*,' and *Neith* was the Egyptian Minerva. *Potipherah* means 'belonging to the sun,' and *On* seems to have been identical with the Syrian *Baal*—the Sun-god. The Egyptians, in fact, were wholly given to idolatry" (SIBG, 282). (Minerva was the Roman goddess of wisdom. The Sun-god in Egypt was most generally known as *Re*; his seat of worship was at Heliopolis in the Delta. Herodotus, the "father of history," relates in detail the circumstances of his visit to Heliopolis.)

\* \* \* \* \*

### *On Dreams: An Excursus*

*Dreams* have always been fascinating subjects in human experience. What is the relation between our dream world and the world of our waking hours? Who can say? Erich Fromm tells the story of a Chinaman who had an unusual dream. In it he dreamed that he was a butterfly flitting around and sipping nectar from flower to flower—a delectable experience. Suddenly he was awakened by a loud noise. Then he began to think, and ask himself: Was I, a few minutes ago, a Chinaman dreaming that I was a butterfly, or am

I now a butterfly dreaming that I am a Chinaman? This, absurd though it may seem, is a question not to be dismissed too carelessly.

*What is the nature of dreams?* Dr. James L. Jarrett, in his excellent book, *The Quest for Beauty*, 59-63, deals with this subject most interestingly. He writes: "There is an easy answer to the question: a dream is the psychic activity—the experience of happenings, thoughts, feelings, images—during sleep. But to go further in our probing is not quite so easy. Why does one dream? To protect one's sleep, says Freud, by channeling certain stimuli which might otherwise wake one up. Not all agree with Freud's answer, but a more important question for our purpose is this: Why does one dream what he does dream? And this: Do dreams mean anything? Do they signify? The easy answer—perhaps the most popular one, even today—is that dreams are mere nonsense, just a jumble of images as if the wind caught and scattered the snapshots from an open drawer. There is no reason for dreaming the way we do—except, perhaps, that when our digestive system is having its troubles, we do tend to have troubled dreams; and when our feet get cold, we may have some appropriate dream, such as walking over snow—but nothing more profound than this. So there is not importance or significance to dreams—though occasionally one may be amusing or weird enough to tell at the breakfast table, even if the audience, in such cases, is seldom as interested as the teller. Jonathan Swift in his parody of Petronius has expressed this position:

#### On Dreams

Those dreams that on the silent night intrude,  
And with false flitting shades our minds delude,  
Jove never sends us downwards from the skies;  
Nor can they from infernal mansions rise;  
But are all mere productions of the brain,  
And fools consult interpreters in vain.  
For when in bed we rest our weary limbs,  
The mind unburden'd sports in various whims;  
The busy head with mimic art runs o'er  
The scenes and actions of the day before.

"But not everyone has thought so lightly of dreams—even before the influence of psychoanalysis. Literature of every age expresses people's concern with their dreams; consider Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream of the fat kine and the lean kine, Chaucer's 'Nun's Priest's Tale,' or the wife warning her husband in Tolstoy's 'God Sees the Truth But Waits' not to undertake a journey because she had dreamed his hair turned suddenly white. Then there are Strindberg's *Dream Play* and Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, a whole novel expressive of a dream—but the list is virtually endless. Dreams, then, according to some strains of folk opinion, are important, at least sometimes. They are ominous, revelatory, prophetic. If they are shadows, they are fore-shadows and had better not be lightly dismissed, though their meaning may well be ambiguous and obscure like the pronouncements of the oracles.

"Our language employs two other meanings of 'dreaming,' both so common as to require no more than mention. One is 'idle, profitless musing.' Thus Wordsworth's 'Expostulation and Reply':

Why, William, on that old grey stone,  
Thus, for the length of half a day,  
Why, William, sit you thus alone,  
And dream your time away?

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH 39:1—41:45

"Another common meaning is: 'wishing, hoping, planning.' When Jeannie of the light brown hair is dreamed of, there is present, no doubt, something more wishful than a mere phantasmagoria. The 'coming true' of dreams is a favorite cliché of song writers and advertising copy writers.

"Now, these two latter uses will be noticed to refer especially to daydreams, which differ from sleeping dreams mainly in being somewhat more coherent and certainly under better control from the conscious will of the dreamer; but as the language suggests, the similarity between day and night dreams is more impressive than their differences.

"So far, then, mention has been made of four characteristics commonly attributed to dreams: irrationality or silliness, occasional prophetic quality, idleness as contrasted with 'up and doing,' and wishfulness as contrasted with present reality.

"As everyone knows, one of the distinctive and (to many people) outrageous characteristics of depth psychology is its insistence upon taking dreams seriously. [*Depth psychology* postulates some conception of an unconscious dimension in the self, emphasizes unconscious or hidden motivation and the emotional element in the human being. It stresses especially the *irrationality* of man.] Nevertheless, it by no means contradicts the common-sense notions. It too says that dreams are irrational, prophetic, idle, and wishful; and it goes on to say that however ill dreams conform to the outside world, they arise from and therefore potentially reveal the inside world of the dreamer. The primary assumption is that there is some reason for our dreaming everything we do dream. This reason, though usually not perfectly apparent at first, is discoverable; indeed, in some sense the dreamer knows the meaning of his own dream though it may require a therapist to help him realize explicitly what he knows.

"We must distinguish, Freud tells us, between the surface or manifest plot of the dream and the deeper symbolic latent significance that it almost always has. A child may wish to go on a picnic and then dream of going on a picnic; but the older the child gets, the more complex and involved his dreams become. He begins to employ symbols which are at once richer and more obscure than the child's direct imagery. At the adult's dreamed picnic there may be apples and flowers and ants and swings and lakes, but these things will seem somehow different from their waking selves—and they *are*, because they are not only themselves but are also persons and acts in disguise. Above all, the dreams are the products of our feelings and attitudes, our loves and hates, wishes and fears, confidences and insecurities. A dream may reveal to us emotions that we are unaware of, antipathies which we have never been willing to admit, dreads that we have kept hidden even without trying to, desires that we consider shameful, beneficial courses of action that for some reason we have regarded as impossible.

"The symbols that dreamers employ are not, according to the psychoanalytic theory, entirely understandable without the interpretive help of the dreamer; yet men for some reason dream more nearly alike than might be supposed. Consequently, there are a number of dream symbols which have a nearly constant meaning, however particularized a significance they have in different occurrences. Water, for instance, seems always to have to do with birth, as journeying symbolizes death. And these meanings, it is curious and interesting to note, apparently do not vary much as to time and place. However unlikely it might offhand seem, there are striking similarities in the dreams of a twentieth-century Wall Street broker; his contemporary, a Zuni warrior; and their ancient predecessor, a Persian king. Yet perhaps it is not so strange either; men everywhere and in every time are born, reared, and educated; they work, marry, raise children, and die. Their

bodies are much alike; they share certain basic needs. All of them must relate in a variety of ways to their fellows; all of them love and hate, know fear and hope; have times of joy and times of sorrow. Man, said someone, is the animal who knows he must die. Man, said Aristotle, is the rational animal; but, said Aristotle, he is also vegetative and carnal. And man, as all men know, is a dreamer of dreams. [Plato taught, in the *Republic*, that the "good" (just) man is the man in whom reason sits on the throne and functions to control the emotions and direct the will. He admits, however, that in every man a wild beast is lurking in his interior depths and may break loose if not continually kept in subjection by the reason and the will.]

"Dreams are irrational if by that description is meant that their coherence is a coherence of emotional tone and not, necessarily, of orderly sequence of events and of images matching those of waking perception and of thoughts arranged in syllogistic pattern. Their irrationality, however, is not beyond all understanding. [The chief characteristic of man, said Aristotle, that which marks him off a man, is the range of his moral potential; he is capable either of wallowing in the gutter or walking up among the stars.]

"For instance, dreams may be understood to be prophetic. Not because of their being vehicles of occult omniscience but because they are records of the past and present, which are the seedbed of the future. Take the wonderful case of Pilate's wife. She warned her husband not to deal with Jesus because, she said, 'I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him' (Matthew 27:19). May it not be that her dream showed her something about her own perception of Jesus that she had not before been quite able to acknowledge? The person who had been dreaming of falling down mountain cliffs might be advised to postpone his ascent of F-6, not because the dreams are a glimpse of fate exactly, but because they perhaps reveal a certain fear of the dreamer, a fear which might during a climb contribute to the actualization of the dreams." (The student who may wish to pursue this subject further is advised to make a study of Jung's interesting doctrine of the Collective Unconscious).

As usual, as on other matters of human experience, our great genius, William Shakespeare, has a most significant comment to give us on the subject of dreams, as embodied in Hamlet's famous soliloquy:

"To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
 And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep:  
 No more: and by a sleep to say we end  
 The heartache and the thousand natural shocks  
 That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep:  
 To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub:  
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
 Must give us pause. . . ."

\* \* \* \* \*

### *Dreams: In The Bible*

Dreams, in Biblical terms, may be classified as (1) Vain dreams (Job 20:8, Psa. 73:20, Isa. 29:8); (2) Dreams employed by God in the actualization of His designs in the production of which He works according to the laws of the mind and perhaps always makes use of

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH 39:1—41:45

secondary causes. These are (1) designed to affect the spiritual life of specific persons, *e.g.*, the Midianite's dream which was providentially overheard by Gideon and encouraged the latter to his signal victory (Judg. 7:13). The dream of Pilate's wife may have been of this character (Matt. 27:19). (2) Designed to be directive and prophetic when revelation was as yet incomplete. These carried with them, it seems, credentials of their divine origin. We find many of these in Genesis: 20:3, 28:12, 31:10, 31:24; 37:5, 9, 10, 20; 40:5, 41:7, 15, 25, 26. See also 1 Ki. 3:5; Dan, 2:1, 4, 36; 4:1ff., 7:1ff.; Matt. 1:20, 2:12. The power of accurately interpreting prophetic dreams was granted to certain favored people, as to Joseph (Gen. 41:16), and to Daniel (2:25-28, 47). Dreams offered as revelations to the O.T. saints were subjected to tests to determine their character. If they inculcated immoral conduct, they were by that very fact proclaimed false; and any person who sought by such means to lead Israel from the worship of Jehovah was to be put to death (Deut. 18:1-5; Jer. 23:25-32, 29:8; Zech. 10:2).

"The dream is a domain of experience, having an intellectual, ethical, and spiritual significance. Living in an earthly body, we have, as the background of our being, a dim region, out of which our thinking labors forth to the daylight, and in which much goes forward, especially in the condition of sleep, of which we can only come to a knowledge by looking back afterward. Experience confirms to us the assertion of Scripture (Psa. 127:2) that God giveth to his beloved in sleep. Not only many poetical and musical inventions, but, moreover, many scientific solutions and spiritual perceptions, have been conceived and born from the life of genius awakened in sleep. [Students of psychic phenomena are unanimous in our day in affirming that the Subconscious in man is the seat of perfect memory, perfect perception of the fixed laws of nature, and creative imagination. See my *Genesis*, Vol. I, 456-7, 460-465.]

"Another significant aspect of dreaming is the ethical. In the dream one's true nature manifests itself, breaking through the pressure of external relations and the simulation of the waking life. From the selfishness of the soul, its selfish impulses, its restlessness stimulated by selfishness, are formed in the heart all kinds of sinful images, of which the man is ashamed when he awakens, and on account of which remorse sometimes disturbs the dreamer. The Scriptures appear to hold the man responsible, if not for dreaming, at least for the character of the dream (Lev. 15:16, Deut. 23:10).

"A third significant aspect of dreams is the spiritual: they may become the means of a direct and special intercourse of God with man. The witness of conscience may make itself objective and expand within the dream-life into perceptible transactions between God and man. Thus God warned Abimelech (Gen. 20) and Laban (31:24) in a dream, and the wife of Pilate warned her husband against being concerned in the death of the Just One" (Delitzsch, *Biblical Psychology*, 324ff., quoted, UBD, p. 275). "A good dream" was one of the three things—viz., a good king, a fruitful year, and a good dream—popularly regarded as marks of divine favor; and so general was the belief in the significance that it passed into this popular saying: "If anyone sleeps seven days without dreaming call him wicked" (as being unremembered by God); see again Delitzsch (*ibid.*). "The conviction of the sinfulness and nothingness of man is related by Eliphaz as realized in a dream" (Job 4:12-21).

There are many instances in Scripture of dreams in which the special will of God is revealed to men. (Cf. Gen. 28:12, 31:10-13; 1 Ki. 3:5; Matt. 1:20; Acts 16:9, 18:9, 23:11, 27:23; note that these last were night visions of the Apostle Paul). Waking visions probably

are to be distinguished from prophetic dream visions, which the seer, whether by day or by night (Ezek. 8:1; Dan. 10:7; Acts 7:55; Acts 10:9-16; Acts 16:9, 18:9), receives in a waking state. As we have noted heretofore, dreams of presentiment (premonitions) occur frequently in Scripture (as especially were the dreams that played such an important role in the career of Joseph, Gen., chs. 37:5-11, 40, 41; cf. 42:9). Dreams and visions are said to be two forms of the prophetic revelations of God (Num. 12:6). Still and all, we are warned against putting too much reliance on dreams (Eccl. 5:7). In the pagan world, because dreams were looked upon as communications from the gods, there arose those who professed special ability to interpret them (Magi). These men were not to be heeded if they taught anything contrary to the Law (Deut. 18:1ff., Jer. 27:9). There are instances recorded of God's helping men to understand dreams and the divine truth communicated through them (Gen. 40:5,ff; 41:7-32; Dan. 2:19ff; 4:8).

"In common with contemporary peoples the Hebrews sought an explanation of their dream experiences. But in the matter of the interpretation of dreams the Bible distinguishes between the dream-phenomena reported by non-Israelites and by Israelites. Gentiles such as Pharaoh (Gen. 41:15ff.) and his high-ranking officers (40:12ff., 18ff.) require Joseph to explain their dreams, and Nebuchadnezzar needs Daniel (Dan. 2:17ff.). On occasion God Himself speaks and so renders human intervention unnecessary (Gen. 20:3ff., 31:24; Matt. 2:12). But when the members of the covenant community dream, the interpretation accompanies the dream (Gen. 37:5-10; Acts 16:9ff.).

"This subject is important for the Old Testament view of prophecy. Among the Hebrews there was a close association between dreams and the functions of a prophet. The *locus classicus* is Deut. 13:1-5, but 1 Sam. 9:9 remarks that a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer. If 'seer' means a man of visions, then it supports Deut. 13:1, 3, 5, where the prophet is mentioned along with the dreamer without betraying any sense of incongruity. The close connection in Hebrew thought between dreaming and prophesying is again revealed in Jer. 23:25, 32. It is also clear that in the days of Samuel and Saul it was commonly believed that the Lord spoke through dreams as well as by Urim and the prophets (1 Sam. 28:6). However, a revelation through dream phenomena was thought of as being inferior to a revelation that was received by the prophet from the Lord at first hand. This is the conclusion which Num. 12:6-8 forces upon us. Jeremiah uses the same kind of distinction in discrediting the 'revelations' of the false prophets of his own day (23:25, 32). The Word of the Lord which came to the authentic prophet was a hammer and a fire (23:29), whereas a dream-revelation was straw (v. 28)" (See NBD, s.v.).

\* \* \* \* \*

### 3. Joseph as Prime Minister of Egypt (41:46—47:31)

46 And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. 47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. 48 And he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land



THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. 49 And Joseph laid up grain as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left off numbering; for it was without number. 50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-phaera priest of On, bare unto him. 51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For, said he, God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. 52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction. 53 And the seven years of plenty, that was in the land of Egypt, came to an end. 54 And the seven years of famine began to come, according as Joseph had said: and there was famine in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. 55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. 56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine was sore in the land of Egypt. 57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was sore in all the earth.

42 Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? 2 And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die. 3 And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy grain from Egypt. 4 But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure harm befall him. 5 And the sons of Israel came to buy among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. 6 And Joseph was the governor over the land; he it was that sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brethren came,

and bowed down themselves to him with their faces to the earth. 7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly with them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. 8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. 9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. 10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. 11 We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies. 12 And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. 13 And they said, We thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not. 14 And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, We are spies: 15 hereby ye shall be proved: by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. 16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be bound, that your words may be proved, whether there be truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies. 17 And he put them all together into ward three days.

18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God: 19 if ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in your prison-house; but go ye, carry grain for the famine of your houses: 20 and bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so. 21 And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. 22 And Reuben answered them saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? there-

THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

fore also, behold, his bood is required. 23 And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for there was an interpreter between them. 24 And he turned himself about from them and wept; and he returned to them, and spake to them, and took Simeon from among them, and bound him before their eyes. 25 Then Joseph commanded to fill their vessels with grain, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provisions for the way: and thus was it done unto them.

26 And they laded their asses with their grain, and departed thence. 27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the lodging-place, he espied his money; and, behold, it was in the mouth of his sack. 28 And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they turned trembling one to another saying, What is this that God hath done unto us? 29 And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that had befallen them, saying, 30 The man, the lord of the land, spake roughly with us, and took us for spies of the country. 31 And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies: 32 we are twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. 33 And the man, the lord of the land, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men: leave one of your brethren with me, and take grain for the famine of your houses, and go your way; 34 and bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land.

35 And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were afraid. 36 And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph

is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. 37 And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. 38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he only is left: if harm befall him by the way in which ye go, then will ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.

43 And the famine was sore in the land. 2 And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food. 3 And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. 4 If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: 5 but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. 6 And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? 7 And they said, The man asked straightly concerning ourselves, and concerning our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we in any wise know that he would say, Bring your brother down? 8 And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the land with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. 9 I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever: 10 for except we had lingered, surely we had now returned a second time. 11 And their father Israel said unto them, If it be so now, do this: take of the choice fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a

THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

little honey, spicery and myrrh, nuts, and almonds; 12 and take double money in your hand; and the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks carry again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight: 13 take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: 14 and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release unto you your other brother and Benjamin. And if I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved. 15 And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, Bring the men into the house, and slay, and make ready; for the men shall dine with me at noon. 17 And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men to Joseph's house. 18 And the men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses. 19 And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they spake unto him at the door of the house, 20 and said, Oh, my lord, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: 21 and it came to pass, when we came to the lodging-place, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand. 22 And other money have we brought down in our hand to buy food: we know not who put our money in our sacks. 23 And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them. 24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed

their feet; and he gave their asses provender. 25 And they made ready the present against Joseph's coming at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down themselves to him to the earth. 27 And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? 28 And they said, Thy servant our father is well, he is yet alive. And they bowed the head, and made obeisance. 29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw Benjamin his brother, his mother's son, and said, Is this your youngest brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. 30 And Joseph made haste; for his heart yearned over his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. 31 And he washed his face, and came out; and he refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. 32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, that did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians. 33 And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one with another. 34 And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

44 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. 2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his grain money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. 3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they

THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

and their asses. 4 And when they were gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? 5 Is not this that in which my lord drinketh, and whereby he indeed divineth? ye have done evil in so doing. 6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these words. 7 And they said unto him, Wherefore speaketh my lord such words as these? Far be it from thy servants that they should do such a thing. 8 Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouth, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? 9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondsmen. 10 And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my bondman; and ye shall be blameless. 11 Then they hasted, and took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. 12 And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left off at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; and he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. 15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? know ye not that such a man as I can indeed divine? 16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold we are my lord's bondmen, both we and he also in whose hand the cup is found. 17 And he said, Far be it from me that I should do so: the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my bondman; but as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh. 19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? 20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother; and his father loveth him. 21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. 22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. 23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. 24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. 25 And our father said, Go again, buy us a little food. 26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. 27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: 28 and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I have not seen him since: 29 and if ye take this one also from me, and harm befall him, ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol. 30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad is not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the land's life; 31 it will come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants will bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. 32 For thy servant became surety for the land unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then shall I bear the blame to my father for ever. 33 Now therefore, let thy servant, I pray thee, abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up



THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

*with his brethren. 34 For how shall I go up to my father, if the lad be not with me? lest I see the evil that shall come on my father.*

*45 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. 2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard. 3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. 4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. 5 And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. 6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and there are yet five years, in which there shall be neither plowing nor harvest. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance. 8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt. 9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not; 10 and thou shalt dwell in the land of Gosben, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: 11 and there will I nourish thee; for there are yet five years of famine; lest thou come to poverty, thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast. 12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. 13 And ye shall tell my*

father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen: and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. 14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. 15 And he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

16 And the report thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come; and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. 17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye: lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; 18 and take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. 19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye: take your wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. 20 Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.

21 And the sons of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. 22 To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. 23 And to his father he sent after this manner: ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with grain and bread and provision for his father by the way. 24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way. 25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father. 26 And they told him, saying Joseph is yet alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt. And his heart fainted, for he believed them not. 27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to

THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: 28 and Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

46 And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. 2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. 3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: 4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. 5 And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. 6 And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: 7 his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

8 And these are the names of the children of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's first-born. 9 And the sons of Reuben: Hanoch, and Pallu, and Hezron, and Carmi. 10 And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohab, and Jachin, and Zobar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman. 11 And the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kobath, and Merari. 12 And the sons of Judah: Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Perez, and Zerah; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. 13 And the sons of Issachar: Tola, and Puvah, and Iob, and Shimron. 14 And the sons of Zebulun: Sered, and Elon, and Jableel. 15 These are the sons of Leah, whom she bare unto Jacob in Paddan-aram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three. 16 And the sons of Gad: Ziphion, and Haggi,

*Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli. 17 And the sons of Asher: Imnah, and Ishvah, and Ishvi, and Beriab, and Serab their sister; and the sons of Beriab: Heber, and Malchiel. 18 These are the sons of Zilpah whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls. 19 The sons of Rachel Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin. 20 And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-phaera priest of On, bare unto him. 21 And the sons of Benjamin: Bela, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ebi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard. 22 These are the sons of Rachel who were born to Jacob; all the souls were fourteen. 23 And the sons of Dan: Hushim. 24 And the sons of Naphtali: Jabzeel, and Guni, and Nezer, and Shillem. 25 These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob: all the souls were seven. 26 All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, that came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six; 27 and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.*

*28 And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to show the way before him unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. 29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen; and he presented himself unto him, and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. 30 And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, that thou art yet alive. 31 And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and tell Pharaoh, and will say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; 32 and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and*

THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

*their herds, and all that they have. 33 And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, what is your occupation? 34 that ye shall say, Thy servants have been keepers of cattle from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.*

*47 Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen. 2 And from among his brethren he took five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. 3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and our fathers. 4 And they said unto Pharaoh, To sojourn in the land are we come; for there is no pasture for thy servants' flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen. 5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee; 6 the land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any able men among them, then make them rulers over my cattle. 7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. 8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How many are the days of the years of thy life? 9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. 10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh. 11 And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt,*

*in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. 12 And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.*

*13 And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. 14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. 15 And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for our money faileth. 16 And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. 17 And they brought their cattle unto Joseph; and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, and for the flocks, and for the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread in exchange for all their cattle for that year. 18 And when that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide from my lord, now that our money is all spent; and the herds of cattle are my lord's; there is nought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands: 19 wherefore should we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, and that the land be not desolate.*

*20 So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine was sore upon them: and the land became Pharaoh's. 21 And as for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of the border of Egypt even to the other end thereof. 22 Only the land of the priests bought he not: for the priests had a portion from Pharaoh, and*

THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

*did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they sold not their land. 23 Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. 24 And it shall come to pass at the ingatherings, that ye shall give a fifth unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food of your little ones. 25 And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. 26 And Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests alone became not Pharaoh's.*

*27 And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen; and they gat them possessions therein, and were fruitful, and multiplied exceedingly. 28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were a hundred forty and seven years. 29 And the time drew near that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found favor in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me: bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt; 30 but when I sleep with my fathers, thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. 31 And he said, Swear unto me: and he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.*

(1) *Joseph's Administration* (41:46-57). For the first seven years of his administration Joseph went throughout Egypt and gathered up the produce of the land that was needed to preserve the nation in the period of famine that was to follow. "All the food of the land," v. 48, "a general expression that must be viewed as limited to the proportion of one-fifth of the crop (v. 34). It gives a

striking idea of the exuberant fertility of this land, that, from the superabundance of the seven plenteous years, corn [grain] enough was laid up for the subsistence, not only of its home population, but of the neighboring countries, during the seven years of dearth" (Jamieson). The Oriental hyperbole here must be understood as actualized in the form of a royal impost: the ordinary royal impost appears to have been a land tax of one-tenth; hence this was a *double tithe*. (It must be noted that Joseph was thirty years of age when he entered upon the office of Vizier of Egypt. Note v. 38, in which the Pharaoh spoke of Joseph as "*a man in whom the spirit of God is.*" that is, "the spirit of supernatural insight and wisdom." Evidently Joseph had been in Egypt thirteen years as a slave, and at least had spent at least three years in prison, after ten years in Potiphar's house. "This promotion of Joseph, from the position of a Hebrew slave pining in prison to the highest post of honor in the Egyptian kingdom, is perfectly conceivable, on the one hand, from the great importance attached in ancient times to the interpretation of dreams and to all occult sciences, especially among the Egyptians, and on the other hand, from the despotic form of government in the East; but the miraculous power of God is to be seen in the fact, that God endowed Joseph with the gift of infallible interpretation, and so ordered the circumstances that this gift paved the way for him to occupy that position in which he became the preserver, not of Egypt alone, but of his own family. And the same hand of God, by which he had been so highly exalted after deep degradation, preserved him in his lofty post of honor from sinking into the heathenism of Egypt; although, by his alliance with the daughter of a priest of the sun, the most distinguished caste in the land, he had fully entered into the national associations and customs of the land" (K-D, 352). "How gloriously does God compensate





to go with them, lest some calamity befall him as he believed had occurred to Joseph. Imagine Joseph's surprise when, in receiving the various delegations, he discovered *his own brothers* bowing down to him "*with their faces to the earth.*" "At least twenty years had passed before Joseph's boyhood dreams were fulfilled. He first dreamed when seventeen years of age (37:2). He appeared before Pharaoh thirteen years later (41:46). The seven years of plenty followed. Then came the years of famine. This meant that his brothers had not seen him for at least twenty years. He knew them, but they were unable to recognize him in his new role of splendor and authority" (HSB, 67). Joseph received them harshly, first accusing them of being spies, that is, of hunting out the unfortified parts of the kingdom that would be easily accessible to a foe. When they explained who they were, protesting they were not spies but servants, Joseph put them into custody for three days. Relenting, however, at the end of this time, he released them, demanding that one of the group remain in prison, but allowing the other nine to return home with grain for their families. He retained Simeon in custody, as a pledge that they should return with their younger brother, a procedure which he demanded in order that it might be proved that they were not spies. (We can hardly think that this charge of "spying" was completely out of line with the facts in the case. What evidence did Joseph have as yet that these brothers had abandoned any of their disposition to deceive?) He had Simeon bound before their eyes, to be detained as a hostage (not Reuben—for he had overheard Reuben reminding them of his attempt to dissuade them from killing him, a disclosure which must have opened Joseph's eyes and fairly melted his heart—but Simeon the next in age). He then ordered his men to fill their sacks with corn, to give each one back his money putting it in his sack, and providing them with food for

THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

the journey. Vv. 26-38: Thus they started home with their asses laden with the corn. When they reached their first halting-place for the night, one of them opened his sack to feed his beast and found his money in it. The brothers looked on this as incomprehensible except as a divine punishment, and neglected in their alarm to look into the rest of the sacks. On their arrival at home, they told their father Jacob all that had happened. But when they emptied their sacks, and to their own and their father's terror, found their bundles of money in their separate sacks, Jacob burst out with recriminations, *'You are making me childless! Joseph is gone, and Simeon is gone, and ye will take Benjamin! All this falls on me!'* Reuben then offered his own two sons as pledges for Benjamin's safe return, if Jacob would entrust him to his care: Jacob might slay them, if he did not bring Benjamin back—about the costliest offer a son could make to a father. But Jacob refused to let Benjamin go.

(3) *Second Visit of Joseph's Brothers* (43:1—45:28). Famine at last compelled Jacob to yield and to send Benjamin with his older brothers to Egypt to buy corn; however, the old man strictly charged his sons to propitiate the Egyptian ruler by presents and to take double money, lest that which they had discovered in their sacks should have been placed there inadvertently. On their arrival in Egypt, Joseph ordered his steward to take them to his house and make ready the noonday meal. The brothers were now frightened, and on reaching the house they explained to the steward the restoration of their money, but he replied that he had received it, and must have been their God who restored it; he further reassured them by bringing out Simeon. Joseph soon followed his brethren and the meal was served, but Joseph sat at one table, his brethren at another, and the Egyptians at a third, "as shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians." The brothers were entertained liberally, but were surprised at

finding themselves placed at their table exactly in the order of their ages, and that Joseph sent a fivefold portion to Benjamin. The next morning they left the city, but Joseph had first commanded his steward to restore the money as before, and to place his silver cup in Benjamin's sack. They had not, therefore, proceeded far before the steward overtook them and charged them with robbery. They immediately protested their innocence, challenged investigation, and invoked death on the man who would be found guilty. But the cup was found with Benjamin, and the distressed brothers were compelled to return to Joseph. Judah now made to the supposed Egyptian ruler a touching relation of the disappearance of Joseph, and of Jacob's special affection for Benjamin; and then, after stating that the death of their aged father would certainly follow the detention of his beloved young son, he offered to abide himself as bondman if the lad were permitted to return. Joseph now understood so many things he had not understood before, *e.g.*, how it was that, as he thought, his father had forgotten him, how that the brothers had paid for their deception, what Reuben had done to try to save him, what Judah had done later to save him from being killed, etc. Everything began to fall into a mosaic of Divine Providence. Joseph could refrain no longer from disclosing his identity. He told the brothers that the one whom they had sold for a slave had become the Vizier of Egypt, and that he now realized that God had used these means of bringing him into this position in order that he might save his household from famine. He assured them of his hearty forgiveness, and invited both them and their father to settle in Egypt during the remaining years of famine. The invitation was seconded by the Pharaoh, and wagons, and changes of raiment, and asses laden with provisions were sent by the king and Joseph for the accommodation of the children of Israel. (The story of Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers is another of those

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

“human interest” stories the like of which is found only in the Bible). Thus the stage was set for the period of bondage, the glorious deliverance under Moses, and the final occupancy of the Land of Promise, just as all this had been foretold to Abraham long before (Gen. 15:12-16). Joseph’s realization came at last that his humiliation and exaltation had been the work of Providence looking toward the saving of Israel (as a people) for their great mission, that of preserving belief in the living and true God, that of preparing the world for Messiah, and that of presenting Messiah to the world (Gen. 45:5-8).

(4) *The Israelites Migrate to Egypt* (46:1—47:12). When the brothers returned from Egypt the second time, the venerable father Jacob could hardly believe their report. But when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to move him and his house, he cried: “*It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive: I will go and see him before I die.*” Accordingly he set out on the journey. The brothers doubtless had told him of their treatment of Joseph, but Jacob could readily forgive them now that he knew Joseph was alive. Jacob’s early life had been one of deceit; he had, in turn been deceived himself; now, however, he could look forward to seeing his beloved Joseph once more. At Beersheba, he offered sacrifices. “*And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night,*” telling him to go on down into Egypt, promising to make of him a great nation, promising to go down with him and bring him out again (that is, He would surely recover his body for interment in Canaan, should he die in Egypt, and his descendants for settlement in the land of their inheritance); and promising that Joseph “should put his hand upon his [father’s] eyes” (that is, perform the last offices of affection by closing his eyes in death, a service upon which the human heart in all ages has set the highest value (cf. PCG, 501). So Jacob and his retinue arrived in Egypt, with his sixty-four sons and grandsons, one daughter,

Dinah, and one granddaughter, Sarah, numbering in all sixty-six persons (46:26). These, with Jacob himself, and Joseph and Joseph's two sons, made seventy persons (v. 27); while the sixty-six persons, with his nine sons' wives, made the seventy-five persons mentioned in Acts 7:14. The following table will make this clear (from OTH, 122-123):

The children of Leah, 32, viz.,

1. Reuben and four sons .....	5
2. Simeon and six sons .....	7
3. Levi and three sons .....	4
4. Judah and five sons (of whom two were dead) and two grandsons .....	6
5. Issachar and four sons .....	5
6. Zebulun and three sons .....	4
Dinah .....	1

The children of Zilpah, considered as Leah's,  
16, viz.,

7. Gad and seven sons .....	8
8. Asher: four sons, one daughter, and two grandsons .....	8

The children of Rachel, 14, viz.,

9. Joseph (see below)	
10. Benjamin and ten sons .....	11

The children of Bilhah, considered as  
Rachel's, 7, viz.,

11. Dan and one son .....	2
12. Naphtali and four sons .....	5

Total of those "who came with Jacob  
into Egypt" .....

66

To these must be added Jacob, Joseph,  
and his two sons .....

4

Total of Israel's house .....

70

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

Benjamin's sons are evidently added to complete the second generation, for Benjamin was only 25 years old, and the tone of the whole narrative is scarcely consistent with his yet having a family.

Upon their arrival in Egypt, Joseph, after a most affecting reunion with his father, presented five of his brothers to the Pharaoh; and the king, on being informed that they were shepherds, a class held in abomination by the Egyptians, we are told, gave them for their separate abode the land of Goshen or Rameses (47:6, 11), which was the best pasture land in Egypt, and intrusted to them his own flocks, while Joseph supplied them with bread during the remaining five years of famine. That they were tillers of the land as well as shepherds is clear from their being employed "*in all manner of service in the field*" (Exo. 1:14), and from the allusion of Moses to "*Egypt, where thou sowedst thy seed and wateredst it*" (Deut. 11:10).

(5) *Economic Policies of Joseph During the Famine* (47:13-27). In contrast to the happy condition of Joseph's father and brothers in the land of Goshen, the Biblical record next depicts the state of privation in Egypt. In need of food, the Egyptians presented themselves to Joseph to explain their plight. On the first such occasion, Joseph purchased their cattle, allowing them "bread" in exchange for horses, flocks, herds, and asses. When the Egyptians presented themselves a second time, they had nothing to exchange for food except their lands. Thereupon Joseph secured the lands of the Egyptian people for Pharaoh, because they received an allotment of food at Pharaoh's expense. This introduced the feudal system into Egypt: the system of land tenure. Seed was allotted to the Egyptians on condition that one-fifth of the produce land would revert to Pharaoh. "Although this act of Joseph involved a measure of humiliation, including the surrender of lands to the state, it made possible

a strong central government which could take measures to prevent famines. The life of Egypt depends upon the Nile, and all the inhabitants of the Nile Valley must cooperate if the the water is to be used efficiently. The government was in a position to regulate the use of Nile water and also to begin a system of artificial irrigation by means of canals which could carry the waters of the river to otherwise inaccessible areas. Joseph's economic policy is described with no hint as to either approval or censure. Some have thought that Joseph drove a 'hard bargain' and took advantage of the conditions to enhance the power of the throne. That the emergency resulted in a centralization of authority is clear. There is no hint that Joseph, personally, profited from the situation, however. On the contrary, the people said to Joseph, '*Thou hast saved our lives*' (47:25). Many, doubtless, resented the necessity of being moved, but in famine conditions it was necessary to bring the population to the store-cities where food was available. Convenience must be forgotten in a life-and-death situation such as Egypt faced. Joseph thus destroyed the free proprietors and made the king the lord-paramount of the soil, while the people became the hereditary tenants of their sovereign, and paid a fifth of their annual produce as rent for the soil they occupied. The priests alone retained their estates through this trying period" (Pfeiffer, *The Book of Genesis*, 98-99). The 'tax' of a fifth of the produce of the fields was not excessive according to ancient standards, we are told. In the time of the Maccabees the Jews paid the Syrian government one-third of the seed (1 Mac. 10:30). Egyptologists inform us that large landed estates were owned by the nobility and the governors of the nomes ("states") during the Old Empire period (c. 3000-1900 B.C.). By the New Kingdom (after 1550 B.C.) power was centralized in the person of the Pharaoh. It would appear that Joseph, as Prime Minister, was instrumental in hastening



## THE STORY OF JOSEPH 41:46—47:31

this development. There is no doubt that Egypt was, during the most of the last two millenia of her existence, essentially a feudal state in which the nobility flourished and slaves did all the work. "At the end of two years (see Gen. 45:6) all the money of the Egyptians and Canaanites had passed into the Pharaoh's territory (Gen. 47:14). At this crisis we do not see how Joseph can be acquitted of raising the despotic authority of his master on the broken fortunes of the people; but yet he made a moderate settlement of the power thus acquired. First the cattle and then the land of the Egyptians became the property of the Pharaoh, and the people were removed from the country to the cities. They were still permitted, however, to cultivate their lands as tenants under the crown, paying a rent of one-fifth of the produce, and this became the permanent law of the tenure of land in Egypt; but the land of the priests was left in their own possession (Gen. 47:15-26) (OTH, 121). It is a well-known fact also that in those ancient times Jewish men were sought as mercenary soldiers by the nations which were vying for hegemony in the area of the Fertile Crescent. This fact does not make the career of Joseph in Egypt an anomaly at all.

The Land of Goshen, or simply Goshen, was evidently known also as "the land of Rameses" (Gen. 47:11), unless, of course, this latter may have been the name of a district in Goshen. Goshen was between Joseph's residence at the time and the frontier of Palestine. Apparently it was the extreme province toward the frontier (46:29). The reading of Gen. 46:33, 34, indicates that Goshen was hardly regarded as a part of Egypt proper and that it was not peopled by Egyptians—characteristics that would indicate a frontier region. The next mention of Goshen confirms the previous inference that it lay between Canaan and the Delta (47:1, 5, 6, 11). It was evidently a pastoral country, where some of the Pharaoh's cattle were kept. The

clearest indications of the exact location of Goshen are found in the story of the Exodus. The Israelites set out from the town of Raamses (or Rameses) in the land of Goshen, made two days' journey to the "edge of the wilderness," and in one additional day reached the Red Sea. "This was a very fertile section of Egypt, excellent for grazing and certain types of agriculture, but apparently not particularly inviting to the pharaohs because of its distance from the Nile irrigation canals. It extends thirty or forty miles in length centering in Wadi Lumilat and reaches from Lake Timsa to the Nile. It was connected with the name of Rameses because Rameses II. (c. 1290-1224 B.C.) built extensively in this location at Pithom (Tell er Retabeh) and Rameses (or Raamses) (Zoan-Avaris-Tanis). Tanis was called the House of Rameses (c. 1300-1100 B.C.)" (See Exo. 1:11, 12:37; cf. UBD, s.v., p. 420).

## FOR MEDITATION AND SERMONIZING

*Analogies: Joseph and Christ*  
(Genesis 37:1-28)

We often wonder why incidents occurred as they did in the lives of the patriarchs; why the ark was builded by Noah, of gopher wood throughout, three stories high, with one door, and with one window in the top; why Isaac was born out of due season, figuratively offered and resurrected on Moriah; why Jacob went into a far country and labored for his bride; why Joseph was hated of his brethren and sold into Egyptian slavery; and so on. But when we find the answer in the fact that God, in these various happenings, was setting up types of Christ and the Church; and that the minutest of details often had a typical significance, we exclaim with Paul. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!", Rom. 11:33-36. We will find many typical references, in the life of Joseph, to the life of Christ.

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Joseph was much beloved by his father, Gen. 37:3-4.</p> <p>2. Joseph was sent unto his brethren, who hated and rejected him, Gen. 37:12-22, Gen. 37:4.</p> <p>3. Sold to the enemy for twenty pieces of silver, Gen. 37:23-28, by his brethren.</p> <p>4. Joseph wore a "coat of many colors." After his betrayal, this coat was dipped in the blood of a kid, and returned to his father, Gen. 37:31-35.</p> <p>5. Joseph was condemned and numbered among transgressors for no sin of his own, Gen. 39. His humiliation.</p> <p>6. Joseph raised from his humiliation to exaltation, to a position of great advantage to his people, 41:41, especially 45:4-8.</p> | <p>1. Jesus was the beloved Son of the Heavenly Father, Matt. 3:17, 17:5, II Pet. 1:17-18, John 3:16. This is brought out by the intimate relationship between the Father and Son, John 10:29-30, 17:1-5.</p> <p>2. Jesus was sent unto His people, but was hated, and rejected by them, Matt. 10:5-7, John 1:10-11, Matt. 23:37-39, Acts 2:33-36, 4:11.</p> <p>3. Sold by one of His apostles, to his enemies, for thirty pieces of silver, Zech. 11:13, Matt. 26:14-15, 47-49, 27:3-5.</p> <p>4. Jesus bore "the sins of many" upon His own body, "upon the tree," Heb. 9:28, I Pet. 2:21-24. On Calvary, the "sins of many" were dipped in His own precious blood, or whatever was lost by the first Adam was unconditionally regained by the second, Rom. 3:24-25, v. 18, I John 1:7, 2:2, Heb. 10:11-12. We meet this blood in the grave of water, John 19:34, Eph. 5:26, Tit. 3:5. The outward washing of the body in water is a figure of the inward cleansing of the soul by His blood according to divine appointment, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38.</p> <p>5. Jesus was condemned with two malefactors of the civil law, although without personal sin, Isa. 53:12, Mark 15:25-28, John 8:46, Heb. 4:15, 7:26-28, I Pet. 2:22, I John 3:5. "A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief," Isa. 53:1-5, Luke 22:44, John 11:33-35, Heb. 2:10.</p> <p>6. Christ rose in his exaltation to "the right hand of His Majesty on high," where He is today, acting as our Great High Priest, the Mediator between His people and the Father, Acts 2:36, Phil. 2:5-11, Heb. 1:1-4, 8:1-2, 4:14-16, Rev. 19:16.</p> |
|--|--|

At this point, the typical relationship between Joseph and Christ is apparently lost. We can see the hand of God in the life story of Joseph. The Messianic hope,

indeed the world's salvation, was tied up in the children of Israel, the chosen people of God. And at this time a famine drove Jacob and his sons into Egypt until such time as they were able to reoccupy their land. How clearly the divine hand is seen in making possible Joseph's exaltation, that his brethren might not perish, and his people might not be exterminated!

Again, there is something beautifully suggestive of the spirit of Christ in Joseph's forgiveness of his brethren, and their subsequent reconciliation! Although, in envy and hate, they had sold him into slavery, he lived to comfort them in God's providence. Said he to them, "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance," Gen. 14:7. Does not this breathe the spirit of Him who prayed, even for His enemies who were crucifying him in jealous rage, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do"? Luke 23:34. From the Cross, O sinner, He pleads with you to come and be washed in His own precious blood.

\* \* \* \* \*

### *Divine Providence: Joseph*

---

A sermon delivered August 20, 1893, by J. W. McGarvey. Originally published by the Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, in *McGarvey's Sermons*, here reprinted verbatim.

---

I will read verses four to eight in the forty-fifth chapter of Genesis:

"I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

The story of Joseph is one of those undying narratives which have been of deepest interest to all readers for more than three thousand years, and will be to the end of time. It is interesting to children, to simple-minded people who understand it the least; and it is still more interesting to profound scholars, who understand it the best. (1) It occupies a larger space in the Old Testament than any other personal narrative, except that of Abraham; and have you never wondered why this simple story was allowed so much space? (2) Whether there was any design in it beyond that of entertaining and interesting the reader, as a novel or a fine poem entertains and interests us? (3) And have you never, in studying the story, wondered why Joseph, after he became governor over Egypt and had command of his own time, spent the whole seven years of plenty and two years of famine without going to see his father, who lived only two hundred miles away over a smooth road? And finally, has not the question occurred to you, Why did God select to be the heads of ten of the twelve tribes of His own people, ten men who were so cruel, so inhuman as to take their seventeen year old brother and sell him into bondage in a foreign land? The task that I have undertaken in the discourse this morning, will be to give, as well as I can, an answer to these three questions, and in doing so, to point out a striking example of the providence of God.

In regard to the design of allowing this story to occupy so much space, I think I may safely say that there is nothing recorded in this Holy Book, which has no higher purpose than to entertain and interest the reader. There is always in the divine mind something beyond and higher than that. If you will read a little further back in the book of Genesis, you will find that on a certain occasion, God, after having promised Abraham again and again that he should have offspring who would inherit the land of Canaan as their possession, commanded him one day to

## GENESIS

slaughter some animals and lay them in two rows. He did so, and seeing that the birds of prey were gathering to devour them, he stood guard and drove them away until night came, and they went to roost. Then he also fell asleep, and "a horror of great darkness" fell upon him. I suppose it was a terrible nightmare. He then heard the voice of God saying to him, "Thy seed shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they shall be afflicted four hundred years. After that, I will judge the nation by whom they shall be afflicted, and bring them out, and bring them into this land, and give it to them as an inheritance." [Gen. 15:12-16]. From these solemn words, Abraham now knows that it is to be four hundred years, and more, before his people will inherit this promised land, and that they shall pass, in the meantime, through four hundred years of bondage and fearful affliction; but that then the good word of the Lord will be fulfilled. It gave him a totally different view of those promises, from that which he had entertained before.

We learn by the subsequent history, that Abraham never did learn that the foreign land in which his people were to be bondmen was Egypt; and that a removal of his posterity to that land was necessary to the fulfillment of Jehovah's words. He lived and died, however, in Canaan. His son Isaac lived one hundred and eighty years, and died and left his children, his servants and his flocks and herds, still in Canaan. Jacob, although he had spent forty years in Paddan-Aram, still lived in Canaan with his twelve sons and his flocks and herds; and up to the very hour when his sons came back from Egypt the second time, and said, "Joseph is alive, and is governor over all Egypt," and he saw a long line of wagons coming up and bringing the warm invitation of Pharaoh and Joseph to hasten down and make their home in Egypt—up to that hour he had never entertained the idea of migrating to Egypt. He as little thought of it as we do of migrating

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

to the moon. What then was it that brought about, after so many years, that migration of the descendants of Abraham into Egypt, and led to the four hundred years of bondage? You are ready to answer, that the immediate cause of it was the fact that Joseph, the son of Jacob, was now governor over all Egypt, and wanted his father and his brothers to be with him. That is true. But, how had Joseph happened to be governor over all the land of Egypt? You say, the immediate cause of it was, that when he predicted the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine, he proposed to the king that a man be selected to go out and gather up grain during the years of plenty, to save the people from starving in the years of famine; and that Pharaoh had the good sense to accept the proposal, and to appoint Joseph governor. But then, how is it that Joseph predicted that famine? You say it was the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream and so it was. But how did he happen to interpret that dream? You say, because all the magicians of Egypt had been called on to interpret it, and had failed. They not only could not see the real meaning of it, but they did not venture a supposition as to what it meant. A dream in which a man saw fat cows coming up out of a river! The idea of cows coming up out of a river! And then, other cows, lean cows, coming up out of the same river, and devouring these fat cows, and looking just as lean and thin as they were before! Why, that went outside all the rules for interpreting dreams that the dream interpreters of that age had invented; and they could not give the remotest suggestion as to what it meant. The failure of the magicians then, was one necessary cause of Joseph's being called on to interpret the dream. And then, how did Joseph happen to be called on? If that butler had not forgotten his promise to Joseph, made two years before, to speak to the king and have Joseph released out of an imprisonment which was unjust, Joseph would have been

## GENESIS

released most likely, and might have been anywhere else by this time than in the land of Egypt. The forgetfulness of the butler, who forgot his friend when it was well with himself, was a necessary link in the chain. He says, when all the magicians had failed, "I remember now my fault"; and he told the king about a young Hebrew whom he met in prison, who interpreted his dream and the baker's, and both came to pass; "Me he restored to my office, and the chief baker he hanged." The king immediately sent for Joseph. But how did he happen to interpret the dreams of the butler and the baker? That depended upon their having the dreams, and upon their having those dreams in the prison, and upon Joseph being the man who had charge of the prisoners, and who, coming in and finding the two great officers of the king looking very sad, asked what was the matter. But how did Joseph happen to have the control of the prisoners, so as to have access to these officers? Why, that depended upon the fact that he had behaved himself so well in prison as to win the confidence of the keeper of the jail, and had been promoted, until the management of the whole prison was placed in his hands. Well, how did Joseph happen to be in prison? Why, you will say that the wife of Potiphar made a false accusation against him. But have you not wondered why Potiphar did not kill him? An average Kentuckian would have done it 'instanter.' I think it depended upon the fact that Potiphar knew his wife well and knew Joseph well, and had about as much confidence in Joseph's denial as in her accusation. And how did it happen that she had a chance to bring such accusations against Joseph? Because Joseph had won the confidence of his master as a young slave, till he had made him supreme director of everything inside of his house. He had access to every apartment, and provided for his master's table, so that the text tells us there was nothing inside his house that Potiphar knew of, except the food



## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

on his table. It was this that gave the opportunity to the bad woman. But then I ask further, How did Joseph happen to be there a house-boy in the house of Potiphar? Well, he bought him. He wanted a house-boy, and went down to the slave market, and found him there and bought him. How did Joseph happen to be in the slave market? Because his brothers sold him. But suppose he had never been sold into Egypt! Would he ever have interpreted dreams? Would he ever have been governor of Egypt? Would he ever have sent for his father and brothers to come down there? But how did he happen to be sold as a slave? If those traders had been fifteen minutes later passing along, Reuben would have taken the boy up and let him loose, and he would have gone back to his father. Everything depended on that. But how did he happen to be in that pit from which Reuben was going to deliver him? You say, they saw him coming from home to the place where they were grazing their flocks, and they remembered those dreams. They said, "Behold, the dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, let us slay him and cast him into one of the pits." Then they would see what would become of his dreams. Dissuaded by Reuben from killing him outright, they put him in a pit to die. It was their jealousy that caused them to put him into the pit. But then, how is it that those dreams had excited their jealousy to such a pitch? I do not suppose that they would, if they had not already been jealous because of the coat of many colors. Now we have traced these causes back from one to the other, back, back, back, till we have reached the source of all in the partiality of the old father in giving the coat of many colors. And brethren, let me say here by way of digression, that the history of many a family trouble, with its trials and alienations and distresses, running sometimes through generations, is traceable to jealousy springing from parental partiality. But now, every one of these causes that I have mentioned

## GENESIS

stands like a link in the long chain by which God, having determined that these Hebrews should dwell in Egypt for four hundred years, after predicting it two hundred years before, draws them down where He wants them to be.

And what are the links in this chain? Some of them are desperately wicked deeds; some of them are good deeds. The fidelity of Joseph; sold to be a slave, but evidently saying within himself, "As I have to be the slave of this man, I will be the best slave he has. I will be the most faithful one. I will win his confidence. I will do my duty like a man." And thus he rises. And then the same kind of fidelity when he is cast into prison. "As I have to be in prison, I will be the best prisoner in this jail. I will do what I ought to do here in the fear of my God." Thus he rises to the top again; illustrating the fact, and I wish I had young men in abundance to speak this to—that a young man who has true character, unflinching fidelity, and some degree of energy and ability, can not be kept down in this world. You may put him down, but he will rise again. You may put him down again and again; but he will come up. A young man like that, is like a cork; you may press it under the water, but it will soon pop up again. Oh that the young men of our country had such integrity, such power to resist temptation, such resolution and perseverance, as this Jewish youth had.

So then, this long story is told as an illustration of the providence of God, by which He can bring about His purposes without the intervention of miraculous power except here and there; for in all this long chain of causes God touched the links only twice, directly: once, when He gave power to Joseph to interpret the dreams of the butler and the baker, and once when He gave him power to interpret the dream of Pharaoh. Just those two instances in which the finger of God touched the chain; all the rest were the most natural things in the world, and

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

they brought about God's design just as effectively as though He had wrought one great miracle to translate Jacob and his children through the air, and plant them on the soil of Egypt. The man who studies the story of Joseph and does not see this in it, has failed to see one of its great purposes. And what is true in bringing about this result in the family of Jacob, may be true—I venture to say, it is true—in regard to every family of any importance in this world; and it extends down to the modes by which God overrules our own acts, both good and bad, and those of our friends, and brings us out at the end of our lives shaped and molded as he desires we shall be.

Now let us look for a moment at the second question. Why did Joseph not go and see his father and his brothers during the nine years in which he could have gone almost any day? I think that when we reach the answer we will see another and perhaps a more valuable illustration of the providence of God. In order to understand the motives which actuate men under given circumstances, we must put ourselves in their places and judge of them by the way that we would ourselves feel and act; for human nature is the same the wide world over, and in all the different nations of men. Suppose then, that you were a boy of seventeen. Your brothers have all been away from home, sixty or seventy miles, with the flocks, until your father has become anxious about them, and sends you up to see how they do. You go, as Joseph did, but you fail to find them. While you search you meet a stranger who tells you they are gone to Dothan, fourteen or fifteen miles farther away. With this news Joseph continued his journey, and how his heart leaped at last to see his brothers again! How glad a welcome he expected from them and inquiries about home, and father, and all. But when he came up, he saw a scowl upon every face. Instead of welcoming, they seized him, and with rough hands stripped the coat from his back, dragged

## GENESIS

him to the mouth of a dry cistern, and let him down in it. "Now we will see what will become of his dreams."

How did the boy then feel? I have thought that perhaps he said to himself, "My brothers are only trying to scare me. They are just playing a cruel joke on me, and don't mean to leave me here to perish." But perhaps he had begun to think they were in earnest, when he heard footsteps above, and voices. He sees one of their faces looking down, and a rope let down to draw him up, and he thinks the cruel joke is over. But when he is drawn up and sees those strangers there, and hears words about the sale of the boy, and his hands are tied behind him, and he is delivered into their hands, and they start off with him, what would you have thought or felt then? If the thought had come into his mind that it was another joke, he might have watched as the merchants passed down the road, on every rising piece of ground he might have looked back to see if his brothers were coming to buy him back again, and to get through with this terrible joke; but when the whole day's journey was passed, and they went into camp at night, and the same the next day, no brothers have overtaken him, what must have been his feelings? When he thought, "I am a slave, and I am being carried away into a foreign land to spend the rest of my life as a slave, never to see father and home again," who can imagine his feelings? So he was brought down into Egypt and sold.

But it seems to me that Joseph must have had one thought to bear him up, at least for a time. "My father loves me. He loves me more than he does all my brothers. He is a rich man. When he hears that I have been sold into Egypt, he will send one hundred men, if need be, to hunt me up; he will load them with money to buy me back. I trust in my father for deliverance yet. But he is sold into the house of Pharaoh, and years pass by. He is cruelly cast into prison, and years pass by, until thirteen

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

long years of darkness and gloom and sorrow and pain have gone, and he has never heard of his father sending for him. He could have done it. It would have been easy to do. And now, how does he feel toward his brothers and toward his father? Would you have wanted to see those brothers again? And when he found his father had never sent for him, knowing, perhaps, how penurious and avaricious his father had been in his younger days, may he not have said, "The old avaricious spirit of my father has come back on him in his declining years, and he loves his money more than he loves his boy?" And when that feeling took possession of him, did he want to see his father anymore? Or any of them? Could he bear the thought of ever seeing those brothers again? And could he at last bear the thought of seeing that father who had allowed him to perish, as it were, without stretching out a hand to help him? The way he did feel is seen in one little circumstance. When he was married and his first-born son was placed before him, he named him Manasseh, "forgetfulness," "Because," he says, "God has enabled me to forget my father's house." The remembrance of home and brothers and father had been a source of constant pain to him; he never could think of them without agony of heart; but now, "Thank God, I have forgotten them." Oh, brethren, what a terrible experience a boy must have before he feels a sense of relief and gladness that he has been enabled to forget all about his father and his brothers in his early home! That is the way Joseph felt when Manasseh was born. And would not you have felt so, too?

Everything was going on more pleasantly than he thought it ever could, with him—riches, honor, wife, children: everything that could delight the heart of a wise and good man—when suddenly, one day his steward comes in and tells him that there are ten foreigners who desire to buy some grain. He had a rule that all foreigners

## GENESIS

must be brought before him before they were allowed to buy grain. Bring them in. They were brought in, and behold, there are his brothers! There are his brothers! And as they approach, they bow down before him. Of course, they could not recognize him, dressed in the Egyptian style—governor of Egypt. Even if he had looked like Joseph, it would only have been a strange thing with them to say, He resembles our brother Joseph. There they are. It was a surprising sight to him and a painful one. He instantly determines to treat them in such a way that they will never come back to Egypt again. He says, "Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come." "No," they say, "we are come to buy food; we are all the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. We are twelve brothers. The youngest is with our father, and one is not."

That remark about the youngest awakened a new thought in Joseph. Oh how it brought back the sad hour when his own mother, dying on the way that they were journeying, left that little Benjamin, his only full brother, in the hands of the weeping father! And how it reminded him, that when he was sold, Benjamin was a little lad at home. He is my own mother's child. Instantly he resolves that Benjamin shall be here with him in Egypt, and that these others shall be scared away, so that they will never come back again; so he says, "Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; that your words may be proved, or else by the life of Pharaoh ye are spies." He cast them all into prison; but on the third day he went to them and said: "I fear God; if ye be true men let one of you be bound in prison, and let the others go and carry food for your houses; and bring your youngest brother to me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die." When he said that, they began to confess to one another their belief about the providential cause of this distress, when Reuben made a speech that brought a revela-

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

tion to Joseph. He said to his brethren, "Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear. Therefore, behold his blood is required." Joseph learns for the first time that Reuben had befriended him, and this so touched his heart that he turned aside to weep. He passes by Reuben and takes the *next* to the oldest for the prisoner.

He now gave the directions to his steward to sell them the grain; and why did he order the money to be tied up in the mouth of every man's sack? "They were once so mean and avaricious that they sold me for fifteen petty pieces of silver. I will put their silver in the mouths of their sacks, and I will see if they are as dishonest as they were then. If they are, I will never hear of that money again." Not many merchants in these days, if you go in and buy ten dollars' worth of goods, will wrap the ten dollars in the bundle to see if it will come back. "I will see," thought Joseph, "if they are honest."

Time went on—a good deal more than Joseph expected, on account of the unwillingness of Jacob to let Benjamin make the journey. But finally the news is brought that these ten Canaanites have returned. They are brought once more into his presence, and there is Benjamin. They still call him the "little one" and "the lad"; just as I have had mothers to introduce me to "the baby," and the baby would be a strapping fellow six feet high. There he is. "Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke?" He waits not for an answer, but exclaims, "God be gracious unto thee, my son." He slips away into another room to weep. How near he is now to carrying out his plan—to having that dear brother, who had never harmed him, to enjoy his honors and riches and glory, and get rid of the others. He has them to dine in his house. That scared them. To dine with the governor! They could not conceive what it meant. Joseph knew. He had his plan formed. He wanted them there to give

them a chance to steal something out of the dining-room. They enjoyed the dinner. They had never seen before so rich a table. He says to the steward, "Fill the men's sacks with food; put every man's money in his sack's mouth, and put my silver cup in the sack's mouth of the youngest." It was done, and at daylight next morning they were on their journey home. They were not far on the way when the steward overtook them, with the demand, "Why have ye rewarded evil for good? Is it not this in which my Lord drinketh, and wherewith he divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing." They answered, "God forbid that thy servants should do such a thing. Search, and if it be found with any one of us, let him die, and the rest of us will be your bondmen." "No," says the steward, "he with whom it is found shall be my bondman, and ye shall be blameless." He begins his search with Reuben's sack. It is not there. Then one by one he takes down the sacks of the others, until he reaches Benjamin's. There is the cup! They all rend their clothes; and when the steward starts back with Benjamin, they follow him. They are frightened almost to death, but the steward can not get rid of them. Joseph was on the lookout for the steward and Benjamin. Yonder they come, but behind them are all the ten. What shall now be done? They come in and fall down before him once more, and say, "We are thy bondmen. God has found out our iniquity." "No," he says, "the man in whose hand the cup is found shall be my bondman; but as for you, get you up in peace to your father."

Joseph thought that his plan was a success. They will be glad to go in peace. I will soon have it all right with Benjamin. They will hereafter send somebody else to buy their grain. But Judah arose, drew near, and begged the privilege of speaking a word. He recites the incidents of their first visit, and speaks of the difficulty with which they had induced their father to let Ben-



## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

jamin come. He quotes from his father these words: "Ye know that my wife bore me two sons; one of them went out from me, and I said surely he is torn in pieces; and I have not seen him since. If ye take this one also from me and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." He closes with the proposal, "Let thy servant, I pray thee, abide instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren." Here was a revelation to Joseph—two of them. First, I have been blaming my old father for these twenty-two years because he did not send down into Egypt and hunt me up, and buy me out, and take me home; and now I see I have been blaming him unjustly, for he thought I was dead—that some wild beast had torn me in pieces. O what self-reproach, and what a revival of love for his old father! And here, again, I have been trying to drive these brothers away from me, as unworthy of any countenance on my part, or even an acquaintance with them; but what a change has come over them! The very men that once sold me for fifteen paltry pieces of silver, are now willing to be slaves themselves, rather than see their youngest brother made a slave, even when he appears to be guilty of stealing. What a change! Immediately all of his old affection for them takes possession of him, and with these two revelations flashing upon him, it is not surprising that he broke out into loud weeping. He weeps, and falls upon his brothers' necks. He says, "I am Joseph." A thought flashes through his mind, never conceived before, and he says, "Be not grieved, or angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither." He sees now God's hand all through this strange, sad experience, and using a Hebraism, he says, "It was not you that sent me hither, but God; God did send me before to preserve life." When he was a prisoner there in the prison, he did not see God's hand. I suppose he thought that it was all of the devil; but now

## GENESIS

that he has gotten to the end of the vista and looks back, he sees it is God who has done it. He sees in part what we saw in the first part of this discourse. O, my friends, many times when you shall have passed through deep waters that almost overwhelm you, and shall have felt alienated from all the friends you had on earth, thinking that they had deserted you, wait a little longer, and you will look up and say it was God; it was the working of grand, glorious, and blessed purposes that He had in his mind concerning you.

The last question we can dispose of now very quickly, because it has been almost entirely anticipated. Why did God select ten men to be the heads of ten tribes of his chosen people, who were so base as to sell their brother? O, my brethren, it was not the ten who sold their brother that God selected, but the ten who were willing to be slaves instead of their brother. These are the ten that he chose. If you and I shall get to heaven, why will God admit us there? Not because of what we once were, but because of what He shall have made out of us by His dealings with us. He had his mind on the outcome, and not on the beginning. If you and I had to be judged by what we were at one time, there would be no hope for us. I am glad to know that my chances for the approval of the Almighty are based on what I hope to be, and not on what I am. Thank God for that!

And they were worthy. How many men who, when the youngest brother of the family was clearly guilty of stealing, and was about to be made a slave, would say, "Let me be the slave, and let him go home to his father"? Not many. And what had brought about the wondrous change which they had undergone? Ah, here we have the other illustration of God's providential government to which I have alluded. When these men held up the bloody coat before their father, knowing that Joseph was not dead, as he supposed, but not able to tell him so

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

because the truth would be still more distressing than the fiction. What father would not rather a thousand times over that one of his sons should be dead, than that one of them should be kidnapped and sold into foreign bondage by the others? If their father's grief was inconsolable, their own remorse was intolerable. For twenty-two long years they writhed under it, and there is no wonder that then they should prefer foreign bondage themselves rather than to witness a renewal of their father's anguish. The same chain of providence which brought them unexpectedly into Egypt, had fitted them for the high honors which were yet to crown their names.

Is there a poor sinner here today, whom God has disciplined, whether less or more severely than He did those men, and brought to repentance? If so, the kind Redeemer whom you rejected, and sold, as it were, to strangers, stands ready to forgive you more completely and perfectly than Joseph forgave his brethren. He has found out your iniquity; he knows it all; but he died that he might be able to forgive you. Come in his appointed way; come guilty and trembling, as Joseph's brothers came, and you will find His everlasting arms around you.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART FORTY-SIX

1. What is the over-all *motif* of the Joseph-Story?
2. Where was Joseph dwelling with his parental household at the time he now appears in the Biblical narrative? How old was he at this time?
3. Were Joseph's brothers justified in their hatred of him?
4. What was it that made his good qualities offensive? Can we sympathize with them at all? Could we be justified in accepting what they did to him?

## GENESIS

5. How did the brothers get the opportunity to dispose of Joseph?
6. What special gift did Jacob give to Joseph?
7. Who were the brothers of whom he brought back to his father an evil report?
8. What were the two dreams which Joseph experienced and what did they mean?
9. What were the three things that incensed the brothers against Joseph? To what extent did envy enter into their attitude, and why?
10. To what place did Jacob send Joseph to find the brothers? Where did he find them?
11. Which of the brothers kept the others from killing Joseph? Why did he do this?
12. Which one suggested that Joseph be sold? What was probably his real motive for doing this?
13. To what people was Joseph sold? What was the price involved?
14. What was done with Joseph's coat? How did the brothers account for Joseph's disappearance?
15. What was Jacob's reaction when he saw the coat?
16. Explain what Sheol was in Old Testament thought? How did the O.T. concept of Sheol correspond to the N.T. doctrine of Hades? Explain the distinction between Hades and Gehenna in New Testament teaching.
17. To whom was Joseph sold in Egypt? What office did his owner hold?
18. How did Joseph get along in his master's house? To what extent did his owner trust him?
19. What temptation was thrust upon Joseph in his owner's house? Against whom did Joseph declare that this sin would be?
20. How did he escape the woman? What was the lie she told? What did the owner do with him as a consequence?

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

21. What special prisoners were kept in the place where Joseph was imprisoned?
22. How did Joseph get along in prison? What two royal officials were cast into the prison?
23. What were the dreams which these two prisoners experienced? What interpretations did Joseph give of these dreams?
24. What special request did Joseph make of the chief butler?
25. How were the dreams fulfilled?
26. Who was it that forgot Joseph and for how long?
27. What were the two dreams which the Pharaoh experienced? What did the word "Pharaoh" signify?
28. Who among the Egyptians could not interpret the Pharaoh's dreams?
29. Who told the Pharaoh of Joseph? What confession did he make?
30. What preparations did Joseph make to present himself before the king? What did these signify especially?
31. To whom did Joseph give credit for the dreams which the king had experienced and for what purpose were they granted the king?
32. What was Joseph's interpretation of the Pharaoh's dreams? Why was his dream "doubled"? What advice did Joseph give him?
33. With what office did the Pharaoh invest Joseph? What special rank did he give him?
34. Who was given to Joseph as his wife? What was her father's name and position?
35. Explain the significance of the names, Asenath, Potiphera, and On.
36. What was Joseph's age at the time he was made Prime Minister?
37. What general policy did Joseph advise the Pharaoh to adopt in view of the impending crisis?

## GENESIS

38. What was the general character of the various dreams which Joseph interpreted?
39. What is the popular opinion as a rule with regard to the significance of dreams?
40. What is the over-all psychoanalytic theory of dreams?
41. In what sense were the dreams interpreted by Joseph premonitions?
42. Who were the "professional" interpreters of dreams in the pagan world?
43. What are the two general categories of dreams reported in Scripture?
44. What two functions do dreams serve which in Scripture are divinely inspired?
45. How is the power of interpretation varied in relation to the functions served by dreams?
46. How closely related are dreams to visions? How are waking visions to be distinguished from dreams? How is the dream related to prophecy in Scripture?
47. How old was Joseph when he became Prime Minister of Egypt?
48. How did God compensate him for his former unhappiness?
49. How much grain did Joseph gather? Where did he store this grain?
50. What were the names of Joseph's two sons and what did each name mean?
51. What area did the famine cover?
52. What caused Jacob's sons to go into Egypt the first time?
53. Which son of Jacob was left at home, and why?
54. Whom did the brothers face in Egypt? How did their visit fulfil a dream?
55. Of what did Joseph accuse the brothers? What was their reply?
56. How long did Joseph keep them in jail?

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

57. What tests did Joseph impose on them and for what purpose?
58. Whom were they ordered to bring back to Egypt and why?
59. What did the brothers think had caused them to suffer this penalty?
60. Which brother was detained in Egypt?
61. What facts were little by little revealed to Joseph about the brothers and the father with respect to what had happened to him in Canaan?
62. What did Joseph cause to be placed in the brothers' sacks? Which brother was detained in Egypt?
63. How did the brothers react when they discovered the contents of their sacks?
64. What accusation did Jacob bring against the brothers on their return home?
65. Why did the brothers return to Egypt a second time?
66. What security did Reuben offer Jacob as proof he would care for Benjamin?
67. Who told Jacob that Benjamin must be taken into Egypt? What was Jacob's reaction?
68. What caused the father finally to relent? What did he tell the brothers to take back into Egypt?
69. What hospitality did Joseph show them when they returned to Egypt?
70. What did Joseph say when the brothers tried to return their money?
71. What did the brothers offer Joseph?
72. How did Joseph react when he saw Benjamin?
73. Why did Joseph not sit at the table with his brothers?
74. How were the brothers arranged at their table? Who got the most food and how much more did he get?
75. What was placed in the brothers' sacks and in Benjamin's sack?
76. What did Joseph have the steward, on catching up

## GENESIS

- with the brothers as they started for home, accuse them of stealing?
77. What did the brothers say should be done to them as a punishment if they were guilty?
  78. How did they react when the cup was found?
  79. How did Joseph declare that Benjamin should be punished?
  80. Who interceded for Benjamin, offering to serve as hostage, and why?
  81. Why did Joseph send everyone out of the room but the brothers?
  82. Whom did Joseph ask about first after disclosing his identity?
  83. How did the brothers react to this revelation?
  84. In what statement did Joseph declare his conviction that this entire happening was providential? How was it providential?
  85. Trace the hand of God in the story of Joseph as this story was unfolded by His providence?
  86. How many years of famine had passed by this time?
  87. What arrangements were made for transporting Jacob's household to Egypt?
  88. What part of the country was given them for a dwelling, and why?
  89. How did Jacob react to the news about Joseph?
  90. What arrangements for transporting Jacob's family to Egypt did the Pharaoh make?
  91. How old was Jacob when he came down to Egypt? What did he say to Pharaoh at their meeting?
  92. What three things did Joseph obtain from the people for Pharaoh?
  93. What did God promise Jacob that he would do for him in Egypt?
  94. What economic policies did Joseph institute with reference to land ownership? What over-all changes



## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

did this make in the economics and politics of Egypt?  
Was it good or bad? Explain your answer?

95. What class of people retained their land? What part of the land production was collected for Pharaoh?
96. How many souls of the house of Jacob came into Egypt?
97. How reconcile this figure with that which is given in Acts 7:14?
98. What are the analogies between the life of Joseph and the life of Christ?